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## ABSTRACT

This publication seeks to enhance the availability of best practices and ideas in career development. The papers included are derived from program presentations that were given at the July 2002 Careers across America conference. Chapters include: (1) Career Tracks: A Collaborative Approach between a University Career Center and a College of Education in Building a Career Counseling Paraprofessional Program (Marilyn Albert, Christye Peper, David C. McVey, and Martha K. Schuster); (2) Stepping Out: New Directions in Internship Programming (Melissa Barnes); (3) Career as Story: An Introduction to the Haldene Idiographic Method of Career Assessment for Multicultural Populations (Ernest F. Biller); (4) Career Development Classroom Money System (Charmaine Boston-Hall); (5) Working Ahead: The National One-Stop Workforce System and Career Development Facilitator Curriculum Training for Instructors (Kay Brawley); (6) Employer Perspectives on Disability Nondiscrimination Practices (Susanne M. Bruyere); (7) From Classroom to Careers: The Senior Mastery Process at Henry Ford Academy

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(Deborah Parizek and Sandy Kesavan); (8) Working with Undecided College Students (Aneneosa A. Okocha); (9) Using the Self-Directed Search Career Explorer with Middle School Students: The Practicality of Hollands RIASEC Theory (Debra S. Osborn); (10) Granite School Districts Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program in Action (Judy Petersen); (11) Holland-Based Career Materials: A Resource List for Educators (Robert C. Reardon and Jill A. Lumsden); (12) Using Hollands Theory To Analyze Labor Market Data (Corey Reed); (13) Developing a Career Resource for College Students in Saudi Arabia (Laurence Shatkin and Naim Atiyeh); (14) Map Your Future through ASAs New and Transfer Student Web Site (Beverly Shelton and Fred Isberner); (15) The Application of Hollands Career Theory in Modern Day Career Services: Integrating the Self-Directed Search and the Career Thoughts Inventory (Stacie Vernick); (16) Career Development and Adults with Moderate to Severe Mental Retardation (John Wadsworth and Karen Cocco); and (17) The Senior Experience: A Transition to the World of Work (Jack Walls). (Each chapter contains references.) (GCP)

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# Careers Across America



*July 7-10, 2002 — Chicago, IL*

*Best Practices & Ideas in Career Development  
Conference*

**A Monograph Developed by ERIC/CASS**

**Developers & Editors**

**Garry R. Walz • Roger Lambert • Chris Kirkman**

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- Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI)
- International Association of Career Management Professionals (IACMP) - Chicago Branch
- Educational Resources Information Center/ Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse (ERIC/CASS)

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year 2002 Careers Across America Conference

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## Preface

This online publication is a new venture by ERIC/CASS in collaboration with NCDA and the *Careers Across America* sponsors to enhance the availability of best practices and ideas in career development. It is a unique publication in several respects. First, it is offered online and in full text so interested persons can download any and all materials they are interested in and put the information to immediate use. Secondly, the papers included in the electronic publication are derived from program presentations which will be made at the July 2002 *Careers Across America* Conference in Chicago. Third, the full electronic monograph will be prominently displayed in the International Career Development Library (ICDL). Searching the ICDL will enable a person to retrieve those articles which speak to a particular topic or the full electronic manuscript.

As a first time venture we are pleased that a sizeable group of conference presenters undertook the challenge to convert their conference program presentations into journal-type articles. They deserve great credit for their willingness to participate in this venue for speeding the dissemination of ideas and resources. It has reduced considerably the time between an author recording his or her thoughts/ideas and the ability of others to access those ideas – quickly and inexpensively.

As a first time venture we are sure that there are steps that could be taken to smooth out the process. We welcome your comments and suggestions. If NCDA and the sponsors believe that the electronic monograph is a worthy component of the national conference we may repeat the process next year. Please let us know what you think.

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# **Career Tracks: A Collaborative Approach Between a University Career Center and a College of Education in Building a Career Counseling Paraprofessional Program**

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*Career Center*

*California State University, Sacramento*

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## **Introduction**

Career Tracks is an alternative for college and university career centers that are (1) experiencing an increased demand for services in a time of reduced financial and human resources, (2) committed to providing a quality practical training experience for those joining the career services profession, and (3) seeking to establish a meaningful and highly visible collaboration with academic programs providing counselor education and training.

The two “people” who benefit most from this program are the graduate career counselors and the students/alumni/faculty/staff utilizing the Career Center. A third “entity” that benefits directly from this program is the career services profession that is in need of experienced, well-trained, knowledgeable, and versatile career service professionals.<sup>1</sup>

In a centralized university career center serving over 27,000 students with three career counselors, the need for additional staff to conduct intakes and provide immediate assistance to students was paramount. Students were waiting to see counselors for three to five weeks, consequently many appointments ultimately failed to show up. The Career Center was perceived as difficult to access. With limited financial resources and university hiring constraints, the Career Center could not expect or afford to add to permanent professional staff in the foreseeable future. How could we maximize the use of our current staff, serve students in a timely manner, and improve our image on campus?

The solution seemed to lie in establishing a functional collaboration with the College of Education’s Counselor Education program that offers a Career Counseling specialization. The challenge was to develop something that would result in a win-win solution, not add to our budget woes, and not require more space.

## **The Career Tracks Model**

The first step toward creation of the Career Tracks model was to develop a proposal to present to the faculty in the career specialization. Two things greatly influenced this process. First, the director attended the ACES<sup>2</sup> conference in San Antonio and brought back ideas, resources and strategies for developing effective programming, teambuilding, supervision and professional standards. This information added to her previous experience coordinating an undergraduate paraprofessional program<sup>3</sup> and our prior experience with graduate interns at California State University, Sacramento, gave us a basis from which to work.

Second, the career counseling staff and the director formed a work group and agreed to meet weekly to research, outline, and develop a well thought out program that we could present to the College of Education. We wanted to be very clear about our goals, our priorities, and our commitment to follow through and deliver a quality program for the graduate students and an excellent level of service to our clientele.

We began developing the Career Tracks paraprofessional program on paper in January 2000, presented our proposal to the Career Counseling faculty in the College of Education in April 2001, recruited our first graduate Career Counseling Assistants (CCA's) in May 2001, and implemented the Career Tracks program in September 2001. We continue to have weekly workgroup meetings to resolve day-to-day issues, to refine job descriptions and the evaluation process, and to revise or develop policies and procedures as the program continues to evolve.

Our initial presentation to the career counseling faculty was very structured. We had two main goals: (1) to provide immediate quality assistance to every individual coming into the Career Center; and, (2) to provide a premiere experiential learning experience for graduate career counseling students.

We wanted to train graduate career counseling students to do triage. That is, to be able in 15-20 minutes to establish sufficient rapport with anyone walking in to the Career Center to (1) identify their most immediate need, and (2) to provide the service or connect the individual with the resources necessary to satisfy that need. Thus, the Walk-in Track became the backbone of our Career Tracks paraprofessional training program.

The Walk-in Track is the starting point for any graduate career counseling student working in the Career Center. We call these students Career Counseling Assistants (CCA's). They must be pursuing the career counseling specialization and they need to have completed Counseling Theory, Practicum in Communication, Career Development, and Appraisal in Counseling as basic preparatory coursework. We encourage students to apply for CCA positions early in their academic program in order to have a variety of experiences and to develop their practical skills as potential career services professionals. CCA's receive two days of comprehensive training before the semester starts to prepare them to work. This initial training is followed with weekly group training sessions lasting ninety minutes plus an hour of individual supervision with one of the professional career counselors.

Topics covered in Walk-in Track training include: CCA Policies and Procedures, NCDA Career Counselor Competencies,<sup>4</sup> Career Center Programs and Services, Career Information Library Resources, Computerized Career Guidance Systems and Databases, Critiquing Resumes and Job Search Correspondence, Career Development Process, Career Counseling Theories, Assessments, Counselor Communication Skills, Keys to Building Helping Relationships, and Front Desk and Reception Procedures. CCA's have multiple opportunities to staff cases with their supervising career counselor and to ask questions of the director and appropriate staff members anytime during their Walk-in hours, weekly training and supervision.

CCA's are evaluated in the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester both for credit in their graduate program and for their performance as an adjunct member of our staff. Once a CCA has satisfactorily completed a semester of the Walk-in Track, they can apply to train and work in other Career Tracks. These tracks reflect all the different program areas and functions typically found in a full-service career center. Our Career Tracks include: Events, Marketing, Workshops, Experiential Learning, Student Employment, On-Campus Recruitment, Career Information Library, and Individual Appointments. Successful CCA's are also invited

to conduct some of the weekly walk-in training sessions. In this way CCA's already working in the center, meet and help to mentor newcomers to both the center and the career counseling specialization.

As mentioned previously, we initially presented a very structured and idealistic proposal to the career counseling faculty. They were impressed by the amount of time and careful thought that had gone into the planning of the proposed program. The concept of a full-fledged, sequential, practical training experience designed to complement and enhance the academic program went way beyond the idea of simply placing graduate students in the Career Center.

The faculty agreed that their students would benefit from an experience in the Career Center and that it would be a viable site. They had questions about the quality and quantity of interactions the CCA's would have with clients. Would they really get enough one-on-one time with clients to merit intern credits? Would their students really want to do this kind of work without pay? Why did we require that CCA candidates provide resumes, cover letters, references, and do formal interviews? Why was it important to us that a CCA do a full semester of Walk-in Track before teaching workshops or doing individual, hour-long appointments? What relevance did working on Career Center events have for a graduate student in career counseling?

Our response was that in the real world career counselors have private practices, portfolio careers, work in agencies, corporations, educational institutions, one-stop centers and many other diverse arenas. To be marketable, in addition to counseling, a professional in the field of career services must understand marketing, employer relations, economic trends, and technology, and be able to teach, present, recruit, and innovate. We were presenting graduate students in the Counselor Education Career specialization with a convenient and unique opportunity to gain six months to two years experience practicing the very skills being sought by employers.

For the Fall 2001 semester we recruited and trained six career counseling graduate students as CCA's in the Walk-in Track. Over the summer we had developed a training agenda and manual for that track. All the CCA's went through the two days of pre-semester training. Schedules were set to provide Walk-in services from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The first day of the semester, the CCA covering Walk-ins from 8:00 a.m. to noon, saw 35 students. His comment, "Wow, they really do come in with all the kinds of questions and needs you guys talked about in training! The training is really helpful!"

It appeared we were literally "on the right track" to get exactly the results desired in our model Career Tracks paraprofessional program; i.e., immediate, meaningful assistance for visitors to the Career Center, and a training experience that would take graduate career counselors from theory to practice to professional readiness. Our CCA's ranged in experience from second semester neophyte to final semester graduates needing only to complete intern hours.

In that first semester 5,079 students/visitors were seen through the Walk-in services. CCA's saw 80% of those Walk-ins. The cancellation and no-show rate for individual career counseling appointments was reduced from 40% to 8%. One CCA graduated and accepted an internship coordinator position at a private university career center; one was promoted to trainer in his human resources job and stepped out of the graduate program for a semester; one requested to continue another semester in the Walk-in Track; one interviewed and was accepted into the Individual Appointment Track; one chose to take a student assistant position in the On-Campus Recruitment program area; and, one did not complete the Career Tracks program.

It was a good beginning that brought many rewards and some challenging lessons. The rewards include and are the result of:

- (1) an internal organizational audit of the Career Center's programs, resources, and needs;
- (2) a vision of how a graduate level paraprofessional program could impact those programs, resources, and needs, both positively and negatively;
- (3) a major commitment of professional and administrative staff time and talent to developing, implementing, and maintaining such a program;
- (4) clearly stated goals, objectives, policies, and procedures for the paraprofessional program;
- (5) detailed requirements, job descriptions, recruitment forms, training materials, participant and program evaluation procedures, standards for supervision, and CCA supervision agreements;
- (6) consolidated effort by the director and career counselors to generate the support of the other Career Center professional and support staff and the endorsement of the College of Education career counseling faculty;
- (7) a manageable start-up plan of action; and,
- (8) a highly motivated group of graduate career counseling students willing to exchange their time and talents for experience.

The lessons learned in that first semester were critical for us. A plan on paper, regardless of its thoroughness, is still open to scrutiny. We learned that it is important to:

- (1) adhere to the major tenets of the start-up plan;
- (2) train, observe, assess, monitor, review, confront, evaluate, and acknowledge that it is not always possible to do everything the first time out;
- (3) bring concerns and issues, even if they seem minor, to the team for their information, support and insight as failure to do so may result in a breakdown of program structure; and,
- (4) have a clearly established protocol for communicating successes, concerns, and programmatic changes with the collaborating academic department.

As the Career Center's Career Tracks paraprofessional program continues, the proof of the rewards garnered and lessons learned lies in the continued delivery of quality service, our readiness to respond to needed program adaptations, and support from the academic faculty in encouraging graduate career counseling students to participate with us. Persistent effort to establish and maintain effective communication between all parties involved in the collaboration is essential. All of us believe this collaboration is beneficial to everyone involved. It serves our shared responsibility for preparing graduate students to join and contribute effectively to the career services profession.

Career Tracks is a program that can be integrated into most career centers serving post-secondary institutions. At CSUS, we had the advantage of having a graduate program in career

counseling on our campus. However, similar collaborations could certainly be established between separate institutions; e.g., placing graduate career counselors in community colleges or neighboring four-year colleges. It is the quality of planning and respectful integration of visions, needs and resources that makes such a program work. Career centers considering such a program should begin with an internal organizational audit and a review of existing models and resources for developing and utilizing paraprofessional staff. A short list of Recommended Resources is provided.

Designing and implementing the Career Tracks paraprofessional program for the Career Center at CSUS has been a time- and labor-intensive process. Three forces continue to drive our collective commitment to the Career Tracks model: (1) reduced financial and human resources in the face of increased demand for services; (2) commitment to providing a quality practical training experience for those joining the career services profession, and (3) desire to establish a meaningful and highly visible collaboration with academic programs providing counselor education and training. Career Tracks reflects a conscious choice on the part of all Career Center staff and program areas to change how we use key personnel and resources.

An internal organizational audit focused our need to provide immediate quality assistance to students and other visitors to the Career Center. The audit also made it clear that a university career center is a complex operation offering multiple opportunities for graduate career counselor skill development. The planning team broke the operational components of the Career Center into eight training tracks and the Career Tracks paraprofessional program model was conceived. Since the first priority was immediate service, we made an obligatory semester in the Walk-in Track the fundamental training track for all Career Counseling Assistants (CCA's) working in the Career Center.

It was planned that once a CCA had successfully completed a semester of walk-ins, s/he could apply for other tracks of interest depending on completed coursework, department approval, and Career Center needs. The goal was to develop a superior practical training program that graduate students would voluntarily participate in to gain needed experience. The faculty in the career counseling specialization agreed to consider granting students internship units for their hours in the Career Center.

After three semesters the Career Center has reaped excellent rewards from the Walk-in Track including improved service to students, greatly reduced no-show and cancellation rates for individual appointments, and improved relations with other student affairs and academic programs. With CCA's assisting students with resumes, job search strategies, occupational research, and exploration of majors, the career counselors are seeing the students who are struggling with more complex career development issues. The time the career counselors devote to training and supervision of the CCA's keeps us challenged and engaged in our professional development as well as that of the CCA's.

In the course of three semesters, we have also learned to adapt the original Career Tracks concept to the reality of maintaining a viable program with integrity and consistency of purpose. Based on feedback from the career counseling faculty, we made several significant changes that proved beneficial to all concerned. We reduced the number of counseling courses required for CCA's applying for the Walk-in Track which brought interested graduate students into the Career Tracks program earlier and for potentially longer periods. The Walk-in Track position description was rewritten to clearly focus on career counseling skills. The rewrite made it easier for the

academic department to approve internship hours for CCA's. We also introduced the Individual Appointment Track with a comprehensive training schedule in order to encourage qualified CCA's to continue working with us. This track is especially important in the summer when our counseling staff is reduced to one full-time career counselor.

### **Conclusion**

The Career Tracks paraprofessional program has proven its worth as a means of providing top quality and immediate service to a growing student population. Money and space for CCA's are perpetual topics for discussion. Careful scheduling generally makes the space problem manageable and is really only a concern during peak on-campus recruitment periods. The CCA's do such excellent work and add so significantly to our center that we are looking into ways and means of providing stipends in the future. Some form of remuneration would make recruiting qualified CCA's somewhat easier; however, we do not want the continued success of Career Tracks to be dependent on the availability of funding. It remains important that Career Tracks stand on its own merits as a highly regarded practical training opportunity for future career professionals.

Creating, implementing, maintaining and sustaining a model graduate career counseling paraprofessional program for a career center serving a large public university is challenging, demanding, and rewarding work. It is the way we have chosen to address the basic problems of too few permanent staff, too little money, and an increasing demand for services. The creation of the Career Tracks program can also be viewed as a tangible commitment to the future of the career services profession. As career professionals in a university with a graduate program in career counseling, it is our responsibility to be active in the training and preparation of students seeking to join the profession. Working with the CCA's and our collaboration with the graduate program encourages us to set high standards for ourselves individually and programmatically. The Career Tracks paraprofessional program reminds us each day to model the competencies put forth by the National Career Development Association.

### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Greenberg, R. In search of career services professionals. NACEWeb Publications, 2002

<sup>2</sup> ACES Conference, San Antonio, TX, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Missouri model, Career Planning and Placement Office, University of Missouri, Columbia

<sup>4</sup> Introduction to Career Counseling Competency Standards, NCDA, January 2001

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# **Stepping Out: New Directions in Internship Programming**

**Melissa Barnes**  
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## **Introduction**

A liberal arts education is a broad and rich preparation for life. Add one or more internships to it, and the doors to the professional workplace begin to swing open. In recognition of this, the Career Services Office at Allegheny College has shifted its emphasis over the last five years to programming related to internships. Although the office has not stopped providing the career counseling, resume critiques and on-campus interview schedules that are traditionally provided by career services offices, all new programming since 1997 has been related to internships. In the process the department has created and tested several new programs tailored for Allegheny students, who are primarily traditionally aged, highly motivated liberal arts students.

The shift was triggered in 1996 by the arrival on campus of a new president, Richard Cook. President Cook had become a strong believer in internships through his previous tenure as Provost at Kalamazoo College, where a shift toward a greater emphasis on internships had proven to be beneficial to the college and its students in a variety of ways. In the summer of 1997 Cook organized a Summer Working Group, a group consisting of representatives from faculty, administration, students, staff, alumni and trustees who convened for an intensive month to research, brainstorm, discuss and envision directions the College could take in order to ensure its long-term viability. One of the assigned topics tackled by a subcommittee was experiential learning.

The Summer Work Group concluded that experiential learning can have a tremendous impact in broadening the horizons of our students, who have often lived relatively sheltered lives. Rather than replacing the emphasis on traditional liberal arts disciplines, which remain the primary focus of the College, an increase in opportunities for experiential learning can augment and reinforce the learning that takes place in the classroom. In the process, it can make our students more attractive to both employers and graduate school programs.

The working group made several recommendations for initiatives that could initiate this shift in emphasis. One was the formation of an Allegheny College Center for Experiential Learning (ACCEL), a center that combines the Office of Career Services, the Office of Community Service, the International Office and student leadership programming into an umbrella unit housed in one suite and with an overall emphasis on experiential learning. The second was the establishment of an Experiential Learning Term that takes place for three weeks directly after commencement, beginning in mid-May.

ACCEL came into being a year later, after a great deal of planning, discussion, reshuffling and remodeling. The Experiential Learning Term (E. L. Term) was initiated the following spring, with the first pilot program occurring in May of 1999. The components of the E. L.

Term are a three-week internship program in Boston, New York City and Washington D.C.; Study Tours in which faculty take groups of students on trips to study conditions in South Africa, Mexico, China, the Ukraine and other sites; community service projects such as the Borderlinks Program on the US/Mexican border; and the awarding of grants for students to attend leadership conferences.

### **The E. L. Term Internship Program**

To facilitate the E. L. Term Internships, the Career Services staff solicits the support of alumni working in the target cities of Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. The staff asks alumni if they can arrange with their employers a three-week internship for students at the end of the school year. The internships are designed to give students a feel for a career field and the experience of working in a major city. They are ideal for students who are unable to find paid internships and/or need to work during summer break.

Although many of these short-term internships are unpaid, the college contracts with colleges or other sites in the target city to arrange housing for students. Students are responsible for their own transportation and meals. The experience fosters camaraderie among the students as they explore the culture and cuisine of the city.

To ensure that students derive the most benefits from the internships, the staff visits and evaluates each of the work sites prior to the establishment of the internship. The staff also hosts a dinner for the interns and their sponsors in each city, at which the sponsors are encouraged to share ideas about where to go, what to do and how to get around in the city.

The staff piloted the internship program in 1999 and offered eight internships in New York and Washington, D.C. Because the experience proved to be a positive one for participating students and alumni, the staff has arranged from 30 to 40 internships in each of the ensuing years. Since there is generally a small number of sites that go unfilled and some attrition due to alumni job changes or students who back out, the number of participating interns ranges from 20 to 30. When they are first approached, alumni are sometimes doubtful that a three-week internship will be of significant benefit to students or employers. After trying the program, however, alumni are generally pleasantly surprised by students' accomplishments, and most continue to sponsor students from year to year.

Examples of E. L. Term internship sites include the Boston Alzheimer's Center, the New York Times, the Center for International Policy, the U.S. President's Office of Management and Budget, and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

### **ACCEL Database**

In the early stages of the creation of ACCEL, the staff realized the need for a site where students could have access to as many experiential learning opportunities as possible through "one stop shopping." They contracted with a professional with experience in creating internship databases. The database she created permits students to search approximately 2,000 opportunities by type of experience, interest field, geographical location and other criteria. The program also sends registered users an e-mail notification whenever a new opportunity that meets their criteria is added to the system. Currently 1186 of the 1822 students enrolled at Allegheny College, or

65%, are registered users of the database, and it is the core communication tool for internship programming.

### **Allegheny-Specific Internship Program**

Allegheny alumni tend to be pleased with their education and to have fond memories of the college. Consequently, they are usually happy to be asked to help students with their careers. Over the years the Career Services Office has engaged them as career resources for students in a variety of ways ranging from providing sites for shadowing to attending career connections dinners and serving as speakers on career panels. As the staff developed the new internship programming it was natural to look to alumni as partners in this effort.

After the success in the E. L. Term Internship Program, which engaged alumni as hosts for short-term internships, the staff conceived the idea of developing summer-long internships with alumni or others with ties to the college. The plan was to create internships that were specific to Allegheny students, thereby eliminating the need to compete with students from schools throughout the country. In cases where the employer had an existing internship program, the staff tried to persuade them to hold one spot for an Allegheny student.

In most cases the staff asks the employer to create paid experiences. They approach employers through personal visits to the worksites emphasizing the accomplishments of previous interns and the value students could bring to the organizations. The visits are followed up by regular phone or e-mail contact. Over the last four years a sustained marketing effort has generated 93 summer-long Allegheny-specific internships in states ranging from Florida to California. Examples include internships with the United Nations, the National Hockey League, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, a Navaho Tribal College, Grey Advertising, and the Segan Company, a Hollywood film producer.

These internships are not always filled, depending on whether or not they match up with students' career and geographic interests. As the program developed, it became clear that students were often unable to take advantage of a desirable opportunity because they had no place to stay and could not afford the housing costs in a city. This hurdle led to the creation of the Allegheny in D.C. Program.

### **Allegheny in D.C.**

Political Science and International Studies are popular majors at Allegheny, and about 20 students per year take part in semester-long off-campus study programs in Washington, D.C. Students who are interested in careers in government, international affairs or national organizations have learned that the best way to get a start in these areas is to spend a summer in the Capital, gaining relevant experiences and making the connections that lead to future opportunities. There are many tremendous internship opportunities in D.C. but they are often unpaid and do not provide housing, thereby placing them out of reach for the majority of Allegheny students.

The department felt that if housing were provided, students could find the remaining means to make a D.C. internship possible. They also felt that a structured program housing a number of Allegheny students together would make the experience less intimidating and therefore

appealing to a larger number of students.

Therefore, the staff created a program called Allegheny in D.C. through which they provide housing for students who have secured an internship in the D.C. area. Funding is distributed on a sliding scale basis. For instance, the cost is fully funded for students whose internships are unpaid, while students who make \$4,000 or more for the summer pay 60% of the cost. For the first year, the eight participating students were housed in a residence hall at a regional university. In the second year of the program, the staff has rented a house on Capital Hill through an agency that specializes in intern housing. Seven men and seven women have signed on to live in the house. One student was hired as a Resident liaison who will stay in communication with the department and arrange an event to connect students with D.C. alumni.

This year the staff also inaugurated Allegheny in Boston, which follows the same guidelines and houses students at an area university. Two students have signed on for this pilot program.

### **Funding**

These programs clearly cost money and raise the question of where the funding comes from. The College administration funds much of the ACCEL program as a new initiative that benefits the College in a variety of ways. When the ACCEL concept became a reality and began to yield student outcomes, the Development Office also began promoting it to potential donors. The College has now received gifts that provide the money for the Allegheny in D. C. and Boston programs.

The administration also funded the creation of an E. L. Fund, to which students and faculty members can apply for grants for student experiential learning opportunities. This fund has been augmented by two additional funds provided by alumni or other friends of the College and distributed to student applicants. For instance, students have received funding to take part in internships at the New England Aquarium, the U. S State Department and the John Hopkins Department of Psychiatry and Neuro-imaging. Students have taken part in an archeological dig in Ireland, a three-week conducting seminar in Austria and an internship with Senator Hillary Clinton. To receive funding, a student must demonstrate that the experience will further his or her educational objectives.

### **Unsuccessful or Unproven Initiatives**

In the process of creating a new program tailored to our students, the staff tried a couple of initiatives that either did not succeed or are as yet unproven. One such initiative—and one that is offered by some other schools—was an on-campus internship fair with alumni representing their employers. The staff had trouble attracting enough employers to participate. And, unfortunately for those who did take part, there was little interest among candidates in the internships they offered. Many students wanted internships in particular fields and locations, and the options did not match their interests.

Another initiative that has not yet caught on fully is a venture into International Internships. Interest in the international arena has grown on campus, and each year the staff is visited by a few students who are interested in international internships, but they tend to start the process too late or to be daunted by the amount of time and research needed to find and apply to an

appropriate opportunity.

Therefore, the staff undertook a project in which they surveyed students to determine their interest in international internships and their preferred locations. When students seemed enthusiastic about the idea, they proceeded to research sites and programs offering international internships and to identify a few that seemed to best match the needs of our students. They visited these sites to learn more about them and to ascertain the fit and then promoted them to students through a Power Point presentation.

The student response was *underwhelming*, and so far no students have applied to the programs. The timing may have been a problem. The promotion began in the Fall of 2001, shortly after the events of September 11, and the new climate following that event may have made the idea of an international internship less appealing. The staff continues to feel that the program could take off in a future, more confident season.

### **Outcomes and Summary**

The effect on campus of the creation of ACCEL and the increased emphasis on internships has been substantial. Students have a greater awareness of the importance of taking part in internships and other experiential learning options, and many take advantage of multiple opportunities, fitting a study tour, an internship and a leadership conference into a summer, or taking part in three or more internships while at the College. The number of students coming to the Career Services Office for help with internships has grown considerably. In the 1998-1999 school year, for instance, 112 students came for such help; by 2002-2001 the number nearly doubled to 222. The number of students applying for grants from the ACCEL fund has also increased dramatically.

As a follow-up to the E. L. Term Internships, the staff asks students to complete a self-assessment in which they report the ways in which they have grown and learned from the experience. The students from 2001, from whom there is the most data, responded positively on a wide range of measures. The growth areas to which they responded most strongly and uniformly were gaining a better sense of their strengths and weaknesses, improving verbal communication skills, further developing a capacity for independent learning, and learning to understand and respect professional and business standards. They also strongly agreed that they would apply what they had learned to other settings.

Reports from the Admissions Office indicate that the ACCEL programs are also having a positive impact in college recruiting. The staff is confident that the new programs are successful in terms of marketing, fundraising and most importantly, educational excellence. Liberal arts and internships are proving to be a winning combination.

# Career As Story: An Introduction to the Haldane Idiographic Method of Career Assessment for Multicultural Populations

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## The Need For A Specialized Multicultural Career Counseling

One of the more definitive guides on using career assessment instruments has been Kapes and Whitfield's *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments* (2001). In this most recent edition of the *Guide*, Edwin L. Herr, in discussing some of the emerging issues in career assessment, noted that "As a more pluralistic and culturally diverse population translates into a more diverse workforce, questions arise about how to create a more diverse assessment system for adults that accommodates language differences, differences in educational backgrounds in immigrant's countries of origin, and how responses to these issues should be incorporated into the training and the career assessment tools for employment and career counselors engaged in career assessment in different settings" (Herr, 2001, pp. 19-20). Consistent with Herr's call for a "more diverse assessment system for adults that accommodates language differences" is the belief that humans are natural storytellers, and, in a culturally diverse, postmodern world people experiencing the same event (or reading the same career assessment test items) may provide widely varying narratives of what they saw, heard, and felt (Ivey, D'Andrea, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2002). Clearly, the challenge in multicultural career counseling is to incorporate a career assessment system that captures these "widely varying narratives" while providing a valid and reliable means for recommending career choices consistent with a client's interests, abilities and values that are embedded within their unique (idiographic) life story. And of course at the core of career choice is the unique personality of the individual (Holland, 1959). The trait psychologist Gordon Allport, in his *Pattern and Growth in Personality* (1937, 1961), stated it best when he noted that "the more we search out, and discover, what is uniform in nature, the more urgent it becomes to account for uniqueness in the form and pattern of the whole" (1961). Allport further concluded that, "Thus science is a nomothetic discipline. Individuality cannot be studied by science, but only by history, art, or biography whose methods are not nomothetic (seeking universal laws), but idiographic" (Allport, 1961, pp. 8-9). Allport goes on to admit that the psychology of personality is not exclusively nomothetic, nor exclusively idiographic, it seeks an equilibrium between the two but there is a need to redress the present one-sidedness of psychology's nomothetic approach (1961). It was just such a redress in the traditional nomothetic approach to career counseling that caused Haldane to note in his *Young Adult Career Planning* (Haldane, Faith, & Dahlgren, 1962) that "any workable theory should call for a pattern of career progress or career change. But since traditionalists are in

charge of most guidance and counseling courses, as well as publications of the profession, ideas of the modernist get around slowly, or may even be suppressed" (p.8). It is Haldane's process, originally known in 1960 as Success Factor Analysis (SFS), adapted in 1974 to System to Identify Motivated Skills (SIMS), and currently entitled the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process (DSAP), that is presented here. It should be noted that despite these name changes the actual assessment process has remained essentially unchanged and is presented here under the DSAP heading.

### **The Haldane Dependable Strengths Articulation Process For Multicultural Populations**

In order to take into consideration the unique experiences, background and language differences inherent among multicultural populations for the purposes of career assessment, the process must allow for the counselee to construct their own story. Using a biographical questionnaire the counselee is asked to identify 15-20 good experiences. A good experience is qualified by Haldane (1981) as any experience that contains all the following three qualifiers: something you enjoyed doing, something you did well, and something you were proud of. These are not milestones like graduating from high school with high honors but actual things you did or accomplished, like organizing the school newspaper, tearing down and putting back together your old motorcycle engine, or teaching your sibling how to swim. Prior to starting the process the counselee is given an outline of four steps to keep in mind prior to writing: (1) accept yourself as unique in the kind of excellence that is always growing within you, (2) recognize that the elements of your excellence probably have been demonstrated from time to time in your life, (3) believe that by carefully identifying your achievements (good experiences) you will find the pattern of skills and talents you have repeatedly used to make those achievements happen, and (4) concern yourself with using this pattern of your self-motivated skills or strengths, the reliable elements of your special excellence.

These 15-20 narratives can be written in any language (provided there is someone to translate them) or spoken into a tape recorder for later transcription. The next step in the process can be undertaken either in a one-on-one process between the counselor and counselee or in small groups of not more than three or four. The DSAP form always uses the small group approach. In this group format one counselee shares the gist of their story (good experience) while another records the verb or verb statements used by the storyteller. These verbs represent the skills or potential strengths of the storyteller. The third counselee is coached on how to interview the storyteller such that they never lead or put words into the mouth of the storyteller but rather ask questions in the open ended format such "how did you do that" or "tell me more about that" or "tell me about how you organize" when setting up that school newspaper. The goal is to probe deeper into the background of the particular verb or verb phrase to see if there is much more to it. I call this the "opening the door" to the underlying roots of the verb/verb phrase. The recorder all the while is jotting down each of the newly "brought out" verbs. In this way the process roots out skills or strengths embedded in the story (good experience). The determination as to whether or not these are "dependable" strengths (something one uses over and over regardless of what kind of activity one is

engaged in) is based on a cross checking of the verb lists across the entire 15-20 good experiences written about. Generally, 3-5 verbs will emerge as reoccurring throughout the majority of the good experiences. These are what Haldane refers to as your "dependable strengths." Other analysis of the stories can reveal whether or not the counselee prefers working with people, data, things, or ideas when using these dependable strengths and under what circumstances one is most motivated to use them. The process is simple and straightforward but takes practice and constant supervision of the groups in the beginning to insure the interviewers are not "leading" the storyteller or putting "words in their mouth." Generally, experienced counselors have the most difficulty with this aspect, as they want to "interpret" or "analyze" the story rather than simply aid in getting the storyteller's "whole" story out.

Once the counselee has a grasp of their primary strengths it is a simple matter of asking them if in the work they do now, do they use their "dependable strengths" on a regular basis. It is not unusual to find counselees that are not using any of their strengths and that their dissatisfaction with their work has always been quite obvious to them but they did not know why until this process uncovered their true skills. And for those planning new careers it becomes less important as to which kind of job or industry they enter as long as they are given a chance to utilize the majority of their strengths. This is what Haldane states as being the cornerstone to achieving career satisfaction and success to each person.

### **Evaluation and Conclusions**

There is little doubt that the need for adapted forms of career assessment for multicultural populations is going to explode over the next decade. Large states such as California have already reached the point where the minority cultures now represent the majority of the state's population. If career counselors are going to maintain a place of respect within these cultures they are going to have to find new ways of embracing the diversity that exists in these communities. The Haldane approach discussed in this paper is currently being successfully used in China and South Africa and has been operating in prison rehabilitation programs as well.

The primary strength of the Haldane's DSAP approach is also in some ways its greatest weakness. It is so straightforward and pragmatic that it often gets dismissed as too simplistic to work. One of the ways that I have attempted to validate the effectiveness of the *DSAP* process is to compare the results with those obtained using Holland's (1987) *Self Directed Search*. By task analyzing the 300-plus occupations in our state's career information system and developing a crosswalk between DSAP results and our career information system I have been able to correlate the career choices selected by my counseling graduate students enrolled in the career counseling class with their results on the *Self Directed Search*. Although not designed as a formal study, I have found rather high correlations between the two systems (80-90 percent).

Thus, in the absence of any other known validated systems for providing an alternative to nomothetic (norm based) career assessments for multicultural populations, I feel comfortable in recommending the Haldane DSAP process. Moreover, Haldane specifically offered to each high school counselor to learn, free, the techniques presented in his *The*



*Young Adult Career Planning* book (1962). No matter which of Haldane's publications you pick up, they all subscribe to the exact same process. And there are regularly scheduled trainings given through the College of Education at the University of Washington in Seattle. Those trainings cover a much more comprehensive curriculum approach in which the DSAP assessment process is included.

In summary, I believe that the Haldane DSAP process is appropriate for all populations, including special needs, alternative education students as well as multicultural groups. As is obvious, the DSAP process is not amenable to a "three sessions and a cloud of dust" process but takes many hours to help counselee's work through the process. By using well-supervised small groups much of the work can be done by the counselee's themselves. The benefits to the individuals in these groups with regard to building self-esteem are limitless as each member of the group is working to uncover the strengths of each other and I do not believe there is a stronger reinforcer of self-esteem than that which comes from peer reinforcement. Obviously, you would not be able to use this with every high school or college student but you could certainly use it with those clients/students who are not truly ready to benefit from the use of the more traditional career assessment tools listed in *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments* (Kapes & Whitfield, 2001).

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# Career Development Classroom Money System

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## The Need

The journey toward personal growth and enhanced productivity in the workplace is filled with obstacles for many young people: challenges that not only threaten their futures but the economic and social health of our nation. The Career Development Classroom Money System was created specifically for these young people as well as the teachers, administrators and schools confronting the difficult task of helping them reach social, economic and personal achievement.

The Classroom Money System is a comprehensive, competency-based program designed to help young people succeed in mathematical computation in the classroom, the community and the workplace. The program includes a flexible, interactive curriculum for grades 3 through 8. The goal of the Classroom Money System is to provide children an opportunity to hone in on real-life money skills that they will be required to use in the real world.

The Classroom Money System is a way to bring joy and excitement to the classroom instantly. This wonderful system opens the eyes of young learners. This is a system of classroom management that gives the teacher power without intimidation. This learning tool empowers young learners in a controlled environment that fosters ownership.

The system does not preclude the teacher's establishment of clear rules and procedures. Within its design is a clear step-by-step approach to establishing rules while fostering the feelings of ownership within the student.

The Career Development Classroom Money System was first implemented in 1982 in Chicago Public School's Edward F. Dunne Elementary School and Spencer Elementary School. The flexible program can be used in dropout prevention efforts, school-to-work transition programs, and as an enhancement to alternative education initiatives.

The Classroom Money System offers students from diverse needs and abilities an opportunity to learn money management skills at their own pace through a variety of means tailored to their learning styles.

## The Curriculum

First and foremost, it must be emphasized that math computational skills are tools required for real-life situations. It is a continuous process that should be developed sequentially. Many math computational difficulties can be prevented if there were proper supplemental activities prior to instruction. The Career Development Classroom Money System deals with the practical procedures that can be used within a school environment to improve math computational skills. Before math computational skills are used to any great extent, the child must have the necessary background experiences in basic math computation

to go along with and supplement the teacher's classroom instruction. Teachers who have facilitated the Classroom Money System have found that with many students, math computation skills can be taught faster by using remedial easy and interesting materials that provide the student with social activities and academic success.

We usually teach to three major domains:

- Cognitive - knowledge and intellectual skills
- Affective - interests, attitudes, values, appreciations, and adjustments
- Psychomotor - manipulative and motor skills

Of the three domains, most of the objectives of the Classroom Money System fall into the cognitive and affective domains. One approach to setting both cognitive and affective objectives was to ask teachers who have facilitated the Classroom Money System for their insights. These teachers have watched students march through the Classroom Money System and enter the real world. They have had an opportunity to interact with the employers of their graduates and obtain feedback about the math computational skills of students in the real world.

Another approach used in developing the Classroom Money System was to refer to a publication by Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus, *Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning* (1971), which has some very interesting comments about affective objectives. The authors believe that the cognitive domain is a building block for affective domain objectives. They believe that the cognitive beginning is the lowest level of an affective hierarchy, since the student is only aware of a phenomenon through an expression of feelings. Next, the student reacts to the phenomenon, conceptualizing behaviors and feelings and organizing them into a structure. Finally, the student reaches the highest level of the affective hierarchy when the structure becomes a part of his or her perspective on life.

### **The Classroom Money System**

The Classroom Money System is based on classroom play money that is generated by the teacher and kept in a safe secure place as any valuable would be. The next component is the job system. The jobs vary from the usual classroom jobs such as passing out materials to classroom attorneys and accountants. The final component is discipline, which is based on monitoring the display of the positive character traits needed for everyone to get along.

Setting up the entire system may seem complicated but can be done on as simple a level as the teacher can handle depending on the students involved. Once the money is printed out, the teacher can begin to distribute it for any number of reasons such as a reward for coming to school. The job chart is easy to implement also. Simply pass the blank chart around and let them choose jobs at random. If, however, the teacher wants more control over the job choices there is a job application that can be filled out and turned in. The teacher makes the choice from the several jobs chosen by the student based on the child's qualifications. The job of passing out such an inexpensive yet so rewarding token to children as play money gives the teacher a positive, simple way to build on good behavior as well as teach critical thinking skills and the importance of working together.

### *Making The Money*

There are several ways to come up with play money for the system. One simple way is to make copies of the money, using a unique color of paper to discourage copying. Counterfeiting is always a consideration. Eventually someone will try to copy the money. Stamping all money with another colored stamp also discourages copying. Also, laminating the money is another way to offset counterfeiting.

### *Distribution of The Money*

Money can be distributed for many different things. Students can earn money for perfect lines in the halls, complete class work, cooperating in group activities, silent reading and good behavior. On the other hand money can be charged for behavior mistakes, lack of homework and borrowing supplies.

### *Checks*

The checks are an important part of the system. The blank checks can be filled out by the accountants and distributed in the place of the money. This method gives the lesson of reading and understanding checks and how they are written. It is also a place value exercise in reading the number in word form and standard form.

### *Classroom Bank*

The classroom bank can be as simple as two desks pushed together with a bag of money bound in denominations of 1's, 5's, 10's and so on. When the bank is open there should be at least one security guard there to watch the money and monitor the banking activities. Additionally, money can be borrowed from the bank.

### *Job Chart*

The job chart can be implemented by simply passing a blank job chart (listing the various classroom jobs) around and letting students choose the jobs at random. If the teacher wants more control over the job choices there is a job application form that can be used. The entire system has a "Want Ads" section. All of the jobs in this particular section are not necessary for the smooth running of the classroom, but they are recommended. Although students may not choose every job it is interesting to see where their interests lie and how they make the job work. Special abilities and creativity often surface in the classroom work place.

### *Job Descriptions*

- **Checkers:** collect and distribute materials. They can also stamp papers when there is a time limit.
- **The Librarian:** makes a display of the new and most popular books, keeps the sign-out sheet for books checked out and reminds students to return books.
- **Bankers:** cash checks, make loans, and make change. It is important to choose an honest student for this job. Get references for bankers before trusting them with the money.

- **Accountants:** write out checks and make ledgers for paychecks(optional).
- **Receptionists:** sit near the door for half of the day and greet visitors with the proper salutations and take messages for the teacher to cut down on interruptions.
- **Tour Guides:** take visitors on a tour of the classroom and explain the money system and the jobs.
- **Attorneys:** write up claims and accusations. They also defend clients in the classroom court.
- **The Time Keeper:** rings the warning bell 3 minutes before the period ends and rings the final bell at the end of the work period. This student must be able to tell time on an analog clock.
- **Maintenance Workers:** oversee the general neatness of the classroom, sweep and clear areas after craft activities.
- **Suppliers:** hands out supplies, manages the pencil sharpener and keeps a debt list for students who borrow basic supplies like pens and notebook paper.
- **Store Managers:** sells the store items when given a winning ticket for good character.
- **Reporters:** write articles and publish the classroom newspaper.
- **Bulletin Board Monitor:** put up and remove papers on the bulletin boards. They may even plan or design a board.
- **Security Guards:** guard the bank and the classroom store when open.
- **Technicians:** play the music during the transition periods and all other mechanical items in the classroom.
- **Classroom Journalists:** write a classroom journal page each day for the classroom journal. They are encouraged to look for positive news items that happened in class that day. The daily classroom journal is kept in the class library and available for everyone to read.
- **Marker Recorders:** mark papers that have simple answer keys and check off papers to make sure all have been collected.
- **Line Monitors:** lead the lines to the directed destinations. No one is to walk ahead of the line monitors.
- **Mathematicians:** are in charge of the math center. They also facilitate peer-tutoring in math when needed.
- **Scientists:** are in charge of the science center.

The money system is a community that can run quite smoothly when the children know their roles and are free to do them. The list of jobs is long and the idea of all those students up and away from their desk at various times may sound like chaos. Most jobs can be done during the orderly traditional classroom setting. Others are best done at a time set aside once a week for Career Development and Character Education. This forty minute a week period can satisfy the students and keep them motivated and trying to earn money all week.

During the Career Development period the following activities can run:

#### *The Wheel of Fortune*

The Wheel of Fortune is just a spinner on a circle with different denominations of money such as, \$450 or \$999, that students can win when they land on a number. Students

usually prefer winning money as opposed to shopping in the store. This keeps the store stock in place longer. The directions for the Wheel of Fortune are as follows:

- Present the Wheel Attendant your ticket.
- Spin the wheel and it must go all the way around.
- Win the amount of money that you spin.
- Write your spin on the back of the ticket and turn it into the attendant.

### *The Classroom Store*

The classroom store is a box of inexpensive toys and items that are of interest to the age group of the students. The store is more window dressing than anything because the money is the real toy to the children. Running the store is simple.

- Go to the classroom store with your Good Character Traits Ticket.
- Choose a toy that you want to purchase and find out the price.
- Count your money and if you have enough, make your purchase.
- Give your ticket to one of the store clerks.

The Classroom Money System instructional approach is experiential; that is, students learn by interacting with one another and by relating subject matter to real life situations. The lessons also prepare students with maturity skills necessary to compete in the workplace. Students are involved in setting up their own classroom bank account from classroom jobs. Depositing money earned on classroom jobs is very motivating. It teaches children the value of savings and helps them practice math in a productive way. Students will learn to be more money-smart as they grow.

## **Multiplication Contests and Learning Centers**

### **Multiplication Contest Rules**

- Players sit in a circle and call the answers to flash cards.
- If correct, the player gets a point from the scorekeepers.
- Winners get the biggest prize, 3 times the flat fee.
- Timekeepers do not get paid.
- All participants make money if they stay in for all three rounds.

### **Learning Centers**

- Students are to do the activities in the given center.
- Students are paid at the completion of the activity with classroom money or a check given by the mathematician or the scientist.

### *Publishing*

The journalist and the reporters use the computers to write news stories. Using the suggested classroom newspaper layout the writers write articles.

### *The Big Raffle*

Raffle tickets are sold. A variety of items can be raffled off. This is a good way to get the money back. These are the procedures for the raffle:

- Students purchase a raffle ticket when the tickets go on sale.
- Sign your name to the ticket in ink.
- Put your ticket into the raffle jar when it is time.
- When the teacher gives the signal, do the finger drum roll. (use fingers not fists.)
- Stop the drum roll when the name is pulled into the air.
- If your name is pulled, come up and choose a prize.

The prizes are classroom money, treats or toys.

### *The Bank*

The bank is any place that the money is set up for transactions. The bankers put their desks together and security guards sit on either side. Students line up in a straight line and wait their turn at the bank. Town Meetings The class officers follow the preset agenda and conduct a meeting addressing the successes and concerns of the students.

### *Bake Sales and Candy Stores*

Bake sales are easy to do and the children love them. Students are given the opportunity to open a store for the bake sale and sell whatever baked goods that they want. It is best to stipulate packaged goods only. Some school districts have rules about serving food cooked at home. Students set up their stores with signs advertising their goods and set the prices.

Although pro-social behavior is fostered by the activities and roles played in the system, other behaviors do surface. As in society as a whole, people do not always follow the rules or obey the law. Teaching pro-social skills and spending time developing the rules with the class are valuable and sound based on the research. Combining these techniques with the money system will serve to expedite the process of building pro-social skills. Using the money, the jobs, the teaching of procedures and developing the rules as a class are all important tools for the diverse classroom of the twenty-first century. The level of involvement that students experience in the system seems to distract students from inappropriate ways to gain recognition. Teaching students to take part in a democratic process and the responsibility of managing an income are precious tools.

My recommendation is to have this system used school-wide. I have found that this system can turn the uncooperative and disruptive student into an important person in the money system and extinguish some of the negative ways these students try to gain recognition.

On its journey toward becoming a mandated, recognized career development program, the Classroom Money System has encountered many obstacles. In several schools, introducing the Classroom Money System to grade level chairpersons, to share its potential with their respective teachers was a problem. Unfortunately, working in teams to utilize a new program does not come naturally to educators socialized to be strong individualists, suspicious of new programs.

Some classroom teachers were adverse to any such new program. Still, despite adversity our grand plans in terms of promulgating the Classroom Money System totally transformed some classrooms that adopted the program.

As a result, we've learned that the best way to achieve change has proven to be gradually, through groups and individuals who champion a cause and spread their enthusiasm to others. Not everyone will be able to embrace the concept of the Classroom Money System. Even though that may be the case, administrators who are not able to change their management style, and teachers who resist change must all be treated with care and respect.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Improving our teaching can be focused on tuning our present skills or on learning new (to us) ways of teaching. When tuning our skills as teachers, we should try to become more affirmative, involve students more, manage logistics more efficiently, induce students to be more productive, and understand better the subject matter we teach. In short, we should work on our craft. By trying a new system and fine tuning our skills, we will consolidate our competence, and we will likely increase our effectiveness.

The time for fine tuning our skills and utilizing creative career development activities is **now**. And I am certain that by facilitating the Classroom Money System students will travel through their learning experiences empowering themselves, gaining proper preparation and resources to complete their learning journey in the real world.

Career education programs should, and will, continue to enjoy a reputation for being creative, agile, responsive, flexible, and adaptive to diverse student populations. Subsequently, students who have been immersed in career development activities will fare better in the "real world" than students who were not provided an opportunity to participate in career development.



# ***Working Ahead: The National One-Stop Workforce System and Career Development Facilitator Curriculum Training for Instructors***

**Kay Brawley**

*President*

*National Employment Counseling Association (NECA)*

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## **New Federal Legislation Creates a Need for Training and Certifying Staff**

The public workforce development system is being profoundly affected by some of the most sweeping and fundamental changes ever experienced in the American approach to workforce development. These changes were set in motion during the summer of 1998, when the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was signed into law, requiring the many publicly funded, autonomously operating agencies charged with assisting American workers to work together cooperatively.<sup>1</sup> On July 1, 2000, in the interest of improving services to taxpayers, these heretofore-fragmented pieces of the public workforce development "system" were mandated by law to begin operations as functionally integrated, philosophically united entities, known as One-Stop Career systems.

As a policy decision, the creation of free, universally accessible One-Stop Career systems is similar to our 19<sup>th</sup> century national commitment to free public education and the now invaluable community resource of free public libraries (nationally adopted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century). As the public placed their faith in these earlier institutions, they wanted assurance that those in charge were qualified, and able to run them effectively. It is entirely reasonable that, on the brink of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a broader array of citizens increasingly using One-Stop resources, they will also want such assurances about the qualifications of One-Stop staff.

Before the Workforce Investment Act, without direct attention on client services and little competition for their business, workers in the public employment system had little need for partnership skills nor, in some cases, much motivation to please the public. Through emphasis on universal access and One-Stops, WIA places a spotlight on interaction with the system's customers and its need to provide improved service to an increasingly diverse public. One of the means to attain these goals is broad-based, systematic staff training, aimed at developing the skills necessary to succeed under the new legislation. Training aimed at customer satisfaction, in addition to compliance with regulations, is the new goal of current workforce development training, leading as well to an industry-driven and publicly recognized form of *certification* of members' skills.

The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc., through their affiliate, the Center for Credentialing and Education, Inc., recognized the need to improve the quality of workforce/career development facilitators or any staff working in career development settings. The Board, using research findings of the needs of workforce/career development staff,<sup>2</sup> identified 12 competencies that facilitators need to master to be effective. Competency standards were

developed with input from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee's Career Development Training Institute (NOICC/CDTI), the National Career Development Association (NCDA), National Employment Counseling Association (NECA), the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), and the International Association of Employment Professionals (IAPES). This process resulted in the initial establishment of a National Career Development Facilitator credential which has evolved to the Global Career Development Facilitator credential.

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at New Jersey's Rutgers University has taken the lead in developing an educational program that provides front-line staff with the new skills and training they need to succeed—and allows them to earn a nationally respected credential that enhances their standing as professionals in the field. The Center has developed *Working Ahead: The National Workforce and Career Development Curriculum* to provide practical help and skills development to those who currently are, or want to be, front-line workforce career development workers, grounding them in associated history, policy, and theory. The core skills and competencies in the *Working Ahead* curriculum have been researched and nationally validated by the career development field, and satisfy the educational requirement for the new Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) Credential.

### **NECA Responds to Legislation and Workforce Needs with Training As Top Priority**

America has been facing serious crises. The economic instability brought on, in part, by the tragedy of September 11, has caused many to lose their jobs, trapping those without education and training in a cycle of hardship.

To address unemployment and transition issues, the agenda of the National Employment Counseling Association (NECA) for 2002 focuses on restructuring county, state and federal workforce alliances to create more viable job opportunities. Critical to this agenda's success are initiatives in education and job training programs to help workforce professionals move workers to higher-wage, permanent jobs—not from one low-income job to another, or in some cases, to welfare.

In 2001, NECA began addressing this agenda by sponsoring the initial graduate level *Working Ahead* Workforce Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) Instructor training.

Over the last two years, NECA became involved in the recommendation and review process of the new *Working Ahead* GCDF curriculum. One aspect distinguishing *Working Ahead* from prior curriculums is a new competency focusing on current legislative programs, including One-Stop, Workforce Investment Act policies, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as well as an increased emphasis on assessment, use of the Internet, and ethical issues with employment. The curriculum contains twelve modules (covering 13 workforce development competencies) providing front-line workforce professionals with the skills needed to operate in a public or private One-Stop career center, educational training or job service environment.

The uniqueness of the *Working Ahead* curriculum developed by Rutgers University's Heldrich Workforce Center lies with the new 13<sup>th</sup> competency, which includes learning activities designed to address the needs of those working in the Workforce Development System – specifically One-Stop Career Centers. The scope of this portion of the curriculum includes:

- History of Workforce Policy and Legislation and connection to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and One-Stop System.
- Learning activities using new Department of Labor products such as O\*NET Online and the O\*NET Interest Profiler.
- Learning activities that address the unique needs of Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers.

Individuals with an extensive background in career development, career assessment, occupational information, job-hunting, retention and career counseling, and have worked, taught, or trained in settings such as one-stop career centers, job service agencies, business and industry, K-12 education, community colleges or universities are eligible for admission to the course designed for instructors. Graduates of this course are listed on an international registry by the Rutgers University Heldrich Center to teach the *Working Ahead* curriculum. The instructors are also eligible to apply to CCE for international certification as having met CCE's educational requirements for a Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) instructor.

The growth of the One-Stop career center system throughout the United States has produced a demand for well-trained, credentialed workforce professionals to deliver a wide and varied range of services. Certification as a Global Career Development Facilitator is one means for a system to ensure a minimum level of workforce professional staff competency. Instructors in counseling and career development may also utilize the GCDF Instructor's course to upgrade their professional skills to provide the highest level of education to human service and workforce professionals in training. Most importantly, graduates of these workshops will be able to conduct courses for those seeking to qualify as Global Career Development Facilitators.

The Global Career Development Facilitator works in an organization that provides career services to customers. The training is designed to enhance the skills needed to help customers make informed career and job decisions, develop a career plan of action and conduct a successful job search. The required GCDF credential competencies, approved by the CCE affiliate of NBCC, include: Helping Skills, Diversity, Technology, Labor Market Information, Assessment, Career Development Models, Employability Skills, Training Peers and Clients, Promotion and Public Relations, Program Management Implementation, and Scope of Practice-Ethics-Consultation.

Organizations with One-Stop system workers who would benefit from the training include One-Stop Career Centers, Educational Institutions at all levels, Youth Agencies, Job Corps, Vocational Rehabilitation, Social/Human Services, Youth Agencies, Job Corps, Corrections, Community and Faith-based Organizations, and Housing Authorities. In today's job market, the private business sector human resource and job development centers are also prime candidates to benefit from this training.

More than ninety instructors are currently trained to teach the *Working Ahead* curriculum.

The list of instructors is on the Heldrich Center Web Site at <http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/linkpage.htm>. The Instructor training is offered as a noncredit course or as a graduate course. NECA will be offering CEUs as part of the course offering.

### **Highlights of the National Workforce and Career Development Curriculum**

The Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University seeks to be a leader in helping to establish an efficient and effective public and private workforce investment system and thereby creating greater opportunities for workers and employers and a stronger national economy. Today, hundreds of thousands of Americans serve the nation's workforce system in state and local government offices, colleges, high schools, community- and faith-based organizations, and human resource departments. These men and women need to validate their current skills and learn new ways of working effectively with their customers. *Working Ahead: The National Workforce and Career Development Curriculum*, offers genuine opportunities to those working in the system and those seeking a career in this profession to improve, learn, and become nationally certified.

**Audience.** Today, thousands of people are employed in private organizations as well as federal, state and local government programs to deliver workforce development services. Their job titles vary: counselors, job coaches, teachers, trainers, job developers, intake workers, interviewers, crew leaders, or employment specialists. While these professionals have many different approaches, they share the same goal: to improve the employment opportunities of individuals by helping them identify, find and maintain careers and jobs. While these workers are bound by a unity of purpose, they have been guided, historically, by little else than legislation and funding streams, regulation, and practical experience. Essentially, anyone with direct contact with individuals seeking service would benefit from this course.

**Benefits.** At the start of a new century, we are charged with creating a Career Development Resource System that is free and open to all. This presents an enormous responsibility—and a great opportunity. As the One-Stop Career System becomes established as a universal community resource, we can expect the general public to have an increased interest in the qualifications of the career center staff. The new GCDF credential conveys to job seekers, employers, Workforce Investment Boards, and the general public that the holder has a minimum set of knowledge, skills and competencies, and has met a professional standard. Specifically, customers/clients, and the public at large, can expect credentialed Global Career Development Facilitators to:

- Understand the components of the One-Stop System including One-Stop Career Center and Career Development models.
- Improve helping and customer service skills to assist customers with making “informed choices.”
- Be knowledgeable of case management processes that support the One-Stop System.
- Effectively use technology as a resource to help customers with career and job

search assistance such as America's Career Network and O\*NET.

- Work effectively with diverse populations, adapting services to meet their needs.
- Understand the labor market and labor market information.
- Effectively use informal and formal assessment tools.
- Follow Global Career Development Facilitator Code of Ethics and know related legislative regulations and policies.

The *Working Ahead* curriculum will be continually updated. As new workforce development policies and processes are developed and implemented, the curriculum will reflect the changes, and the curriculum can also be customized to meet local training needs. However, to meet the educational requirements for GCDF certification, a full 120-hour course of instruction must be completed. Others will receive a certificate of attendance.

The curriculum will help those making a career in this profession develop specific skills needed to facilitate the career development of adults and young people coming through the One-Stop Career System, ultimately connecting with most organizations providing career development services to the public. The curriculum is also designed to enhance a student's professional identity and pride, as well as understanding of the scope of the profession, and the history and theory upon which it is based.

***Course Administration and Implementation.*** The Heldrich Center curriculum integrates hands-on experience and theory through instruction in 13 core competencies by providing critical helping/customer service skills throughout. This approach will provide students with the training to work effectively in a high-quality career services environment. The 120-hour class time in a course taught by certified instructors meets the education requirement for the CCE international credential.

***Customizing the Curriculum.*** Through customization, the educational requirements for the GCDF credential can be achieved through the Heldrich Center curriculum, utilizing a multilevel training package that promotes continuous improvement and lifelong learning. Specifically, an agency can determine which competencies are delivered and the schedule for delivery. This approach allows the agency to prioritize the competencies delivered, based upon agency-determined time frames and staffing needs. Each curriculum module of the *Working Ahead* curriculum or its sub-parts can be offered as part of a full 120-hour curriculum or on an individual basis. However, to meet the educational requirement of the GCDF Credential, a full program must be completed.

Accessibility to this program will be greatly expanded in the near future with the provision of distance learning (an online course program). This delivery format will afford agencies, staff and others interested in obtaining the credential, greater access, availability and customization. The distance learning component will be combined with in-person/group sessions, establishing a balance between technology applications and interpersonal/in-person learning. Thus, while the online application removes the barriers of time and space associated with traditional learning, the in-person sessions balance the provision for experiential learning.

***Heldrich Center Instructor Registry.*** The Heldrich Center has established a *Working Ahead* Instructor Registry to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum. Individuals who successfully complete the *Working Ahead Instructor Course* will be certified by the Heldrich Center and their names will be placed on the Instructor Registry. In addition, the Center for Credentialing and Education, Inc. will be notified that the individual is a Heldrich Center Registered *Working Ahead* Instructor. The Registry will enable organizations that want to have their staff trained in *Working Ahead* to know who are the qualified instructors certified to teach the program. The Registry will also enable instructors to network with each other, as well as, provide Heldrich Center updates and communication.

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#### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration programs, the US Employment Service, Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans' Services, community colleges, among many others.

<sup>2</sup> "Training Needs of Career Development Facilitators," Judith Hoppin and Howard Splete, Career Development and Training Institute at Oakland University, March 1994

# Employer Perspectives on Disability Nondiscrimination Practices

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## U.S. Workforce Participation Rates of People with Disabilities

It is estimated that 14 per cent of Americans are people with disabilities, approximately one in every seven of us.<sup>1</sup> Many individuals with disabilities are significantly unemployed or underemployed compared to their non-disabled peers, and this represents a significant loss of willing and able talent to both private and public sector organizations, as well as loss of income and social and economic participation for people with disabilities. This is true despite the fact that it has been over a decade since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits disability discrimination. According to Burkhauser, Daly, and Houtenville (2000), using the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) for working-age civilians in 1999, 34% of men and 33% of women with work disabilities were employed during last year, compared to 95% of men and 82% of women without work disabilities. Men and women with disabilities also worked fewer hours on average (approximately one-third less) than those without disabilities. This disparity is a function of inequities in social policy, access to education, training, and employment, as well as society's attitudes.

To illustrate this disparity pictorially, *Figure 1* presents the relative employment rate of men with disabilities compared to their non-disabled peers on a state-by-state comparison (Houtenville, 2001).<sup>2</sup> (The relative employment rate is the unemployment of those with disabilities as a percentage of the employment rate of those with and without disabilities. The larger the number is, the closer are the employment rates of those with and without disabilities.)

As the workforce ages, work limitations due to disabilities also increase. According to the March 2000 Current Population Survey, 6.7% of those aged 25-34 reported a work limitation. For individuals ages 45-54, the proportion reporting work limitations increased to nearly one in ten (9.8%) and to 16.1% of those aged 55-61 (Burkhauser and Houtenville, in press). The increase in work limitations, coupled with a rapidly growing population of older workers, greatly increases the number of people who may require assistance from career development professionals. Another consideration for career development specialists is that, although most career development professionals may be focusing their efforts to assist individuals to obtain careers in the private sector, with 2.7 million employees,<sup>3</sup> the U.S. federal government continues to be the largest single employer in the U.S. and an important career and job placement opportunity for people with disabilities. This may be particularly true at this time, since there is an executive order that mandates that the federal agencies will collectively hire 100,000 individuals with disabilities over the next five years.<sup>4</sup>

## **Cornell University Human Resources Disability Nondiscrimination Policies and Practices Research**

Over the past three to four years, Cornell University has been involved in research to explore how disability discrimination legislation, like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, impact employer policies and practices regarding hiring, retaining, and accommodating applicants and employees with disabilities. The purpose of this paper is to describe the process by which Cornell conducted this research, the research findings regarding current employer practices, employer reported remaining barriers to people with disabilities, employer recommended ways to address these barriers, and the implications of these findings for career development professionals.

Two ten-page parallel surveys covering issues dealing with the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and for federal sector organizations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, were used to survey a random sample of the membership of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the entire membership of the Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), and the human resource (HR) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) personnel in U.S. Federal agencies.<sup>5</sup> The surveys included items covering: the reasonable accommodation process; recruitment, pre-employment screening, testing, and new employee orientation; health and other benefits of employment; opportunities for promotion/training; disciplinary process/grievance, dismissal or termination; interaction with labor/industrial/collective bargaining issues and other employment legislation; personnel training on the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act; resources used and found most helpful in handling disability nondiscrimination and accommodation disputes; and the role of disability management programs in contributing to the accommodation process and workplace acceptance of employees with disabilities.

The comparative results presented here are therefore based on the feedback of approximately 800-plus private-sector and 400-plus federal-sector employer representatives, mostly HR representatives, since an HR membership organization (SHRM) was surveyed and HR and Equal Employment Opportunity representatives were the informants selected for the federal sector research.

### **How Employers are Accommodating to Date**

#### *Workplace Accommodations in General*

In both sample groups, those surveyed were asked about whether they had made certain changes in the workplace in order to meet the needs of employees with disabilities, and asked to rate the degree of difficulty in making those changes (*see Figure 2*). In both groups, the change most often made, but also seen as the most difficult to make, was changing co-worker or supervisor attitudes toward the employee with a disability (32 percent of private sector and 33 percent of federal representatives indicated this change was “difficult” or “very difficult”). The majority of respondents in both groups have made all of the listed modifications to organizational policies and practices to help overcome the barriers to employment and advancement faced by people with disabilities. Changes made by more than three quarters of respondents’ organizations include: ensuring equal pay and benefits,



creating flexibility in the performance management system, modifying the return to work policy, and adjusting leave policies.

#### *Accommodations in Applicant Interviewing*

Respondents were presented with a number of employment disability nondiscrimination compliance considerations in the applicant interview process and asked how familiar their organizations' interview staff is with each of these elements (*see Figure 3*). In general, respondents reported the highest levels of familiarity with framing questions about job tasks, restrictions on eliciting medical information, when to ask about how the applicant would perform job tasks, and restrictions on obtaining medical information.

Across groups, respondents were much less familiar with accommodations for people with visual or hearing impairments such as adapting print materials for people with visual impairments, use of a reader for a person with a visual impairment, and the use of TTY/text telephones to set up interviews. Federal sector respondents indicated a much greater familiarity with accessing sign language interpreters, however (33 percent of private sector compared to 76 percent of Federal respondents reported their staff was "familiar" or "very familiar" with this issue). Federal respondents, while least familiar with accommodations for visual or hearing impairments, were far more familiar with them than their private sector counterparts. The private sector and federal sector respondents showed statistically significant differences in their responses in all of the areas presented, but one, restrictions eliciting medical information.

#### **Remaining Barriers and Ways to Address Them**

In the Cornell study, respondents were presented with seven possible barriers to the employment and advancement of people with disabilities. There was a statistically significant difference between private- and federal-sector respondents in two of the areas, although in general the profile of perceived barriers in terms of overall percentage of response was similar.

Interestingly, in both the federal and private sectors, cost of training, supervision, and accommodations for applicants or employees with disabilities were least likely to be rated as significant continuing barriers, compared to other areas. The continuing barriers to employment and advancement for persons with disabilities reported by both private and federal sector employers were in the areas of lack of related experience (49 percent reported by private and 53 percent by federal), and lack of requisite skills and training in the applicant or employee with a disability (39 percent for private-sector respondents and 45 percent for federal). The next most often cited was supervisor knowledge of how to make accommodations (31 percent in the private-sector respondents and 34 percent in the federal). Attitudes or stereotypes among coworkers and supervisors toward persons with disabilities were seen as the third most significant barrier among federal respondents (43 percent), and fifth among private-sector respondents (22 percent).

Not only were respondents asked to identify possible employment and advancement barriers, but they were also asked to rate the effectiveness of six methods of reducing such barriers. There was no difference in the primary means identified by both sectors, which

was visible top management commitment (81 percent for the private-sector respondents, 90 percent for federal). The next three most popular means to reduce barriers were ranked very closely within both respondent groups, though there was a statistically significant difference between groups. These means were staff training, with 62 percent of private and 71 percent of federal reporting it as an effective or very effective way of reducing barriers; mentoring (59 and 71 percent for private and federal, respectively); and on-site consultation or technical assistance (58 percent and 71 percent, respectively). Tax incentives were seen as the least effective means to reduce such barriers by private-sector employers; indeed only 25 percent reported these as effective or very effective in reducing barriers. A parallel item on special budget allocations as a way to reduce accommodation costs to employers was asked on the federal survey. Sixty-nine percent of those interviewed saw this as effective or very effective in reducing barriers.

The survey also asked respondents to rate twelve often-used resources to handle accommodations and disability nondiscrimination issues. Across both groups, internal legal counsel ranked highly as a resource often used to resolve ADA disputes (82 and 85 percent for the private and federal sectors respectively). This was the most-often used resource for the private sector group, and a close second in the federal group, topped only by the agency EEO office (90 percent for federal respondents). The next most often used in the private sector were professional societies such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), and safety and disability staff within the organization. For the federal group, after EEO and legal advisors the next most often used resources to resolve ADA disputes were safety staff and state rehabilitation agencies (72 and 70 percent).

Among the least used resources in this listing were dispute resolution centers or mediation (10 percent) or union representatives (11 percent) in the private sector and external legal counsel (13 percent) for the federal sector respondents. By contrast, almost half of the federal sector respondents reported using alternative dispute resolution/mediation and the union representative to resolve accommodation and disability nondiscrimination issues (52 and 49 percent respectively).

Respondents were also asked to rate the degree of helpfulness of those resources that they used. Private sector respondents rated the legal counsel as the most helpful resource (87 percent found it helpful or very helpful), while disability management staff came in first in the federal sample (84 percent).

Survey informants were also asked the informational media used to address their ADA issues and their degree of helpfulness. There was a statistically significant difference between sample groups in all categories, but respondents from both identified print/video resources as the top preferred medium (73 percent for private sector, 81 percent for federal). For private sector respondents this was followed by on-site consultation, newsletters, and web sites or listservs. Federal employees ranked web sites or listservs second after print/video, followed by on-site consultation, and newsletters. Least favored for both groups was telephone consultation (31 percent of private sector, 51 percent of federal).

### **Implications for Career Development Specialists**

Career development professionals working with persons with disabilities to assist them with selecting appropriate employment goals and designing a related plan to achieve

these goals, can better serve their clients by being informed about employment disability discrimination legislation and its impact on the workplace. Disability civil rights legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990<sup>6</sup> and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended<sup>7</sup> provide significant protections against workplace discrimination for applicants and employees with disabilities. To realize these protections, people with disabilities must be informed about their rights, and career development professionals can assist by informing their clients about the protections which these legislative mandates offer.

In addition, career development professionals can benefit from understanding the ways that employers have responded to the regulatory requirements of these laws to date, and also differences in response between private and federal sector workplaces. Specifically, it is helpful to know where employers continue to have difficulty with disability issues, and where they look to find assistance when an applicant or employee raises a disability question or requests an accommodation. For example, with an aging workforce that is likely to experience increasingly visual and hearing impairments, it is especially helpful to know that this is an area that employer representatives find difficult and have less familiarity with than other kinds of accommodations for people with disabilities.

One of the premises of the research described in this paper is that the human resource (HR) professional is an important point person in the workplace where all employment processes are concerned, and therefore an important person relative to disability discrimination issues. Knowing this, career development professionals who assist their clients with disabilities to actually access employment and support them in the employment process, will find the HR professionals a good resource within the employment setting to trouble shoot needed accommodations, and other considerations which may arise in the placement and continuing employment processes.

Lastly, it is worthy to note that employers report using many of their own internal resources to troubleshoot disability issues when they arise, and that these resources may differ in use between the private and federal sectors. Knowing that employers rely on their legal counsel, disability management specialists, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) offices, and/or health and safety professionals, can provide the career development professional with further organization resources to assist the employee with a disability in trouble-shooting disability accommodations questions, if they occur.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In summary, individuals with disabilities make up a significant portion of the working-age population in America, and yet they remain vastly under- or unemployed compared to their non-disabled peers. It is vital that this disparity in opportunity be addressed, and career development professionals can assist in addressing this inequity through the services they deliver. By understanding the basic requirements of employment disability nondiscrimination legislation, knowing key players within the work environment who contribute to the accommodation process, areas that employers might need assistance with in responding to disability issues effectively, and resources which can help, career development specialists can better move toward a more equitable workplace, where Americans with disabilities find a receptive environment to utilize their talents and abilities.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>U. S Bureau of the Census (2000) Supplementary Survey Summary Tables, QT-02. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.

<sup>2</sup> A complete copy of this report is available on-line from Cornell University at web site: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/rrtc/papers.html>.

<sup>3</sup>Monthly Report of Federal Civilian Employment (SF 113-A); Office of Workforce Information, within the *Fact Book 2001 Edition, Federal Civilian Workforce Statistics* <http://www.opm.gov/feddata/01factbk.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Further information about hiring opportunities for people with disabilities within the Federal Government can be found at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management web site: <http://www.opm.gov/disability/employment.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Two sponsors funded this Cornell University research. The US Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) funded the study of private sector employers as a Research and Demonstration (grant No. H133A70005); this was a collaborative effort with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), and the Lewin Group. The Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities in the U.S. Department of Labor funded the survey of federal human resource and equal employment opportunity personnel.

<sup>6</sup> Further information about Title I, the employment provisions of the ADA can be found on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity web site: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/ada.html>.

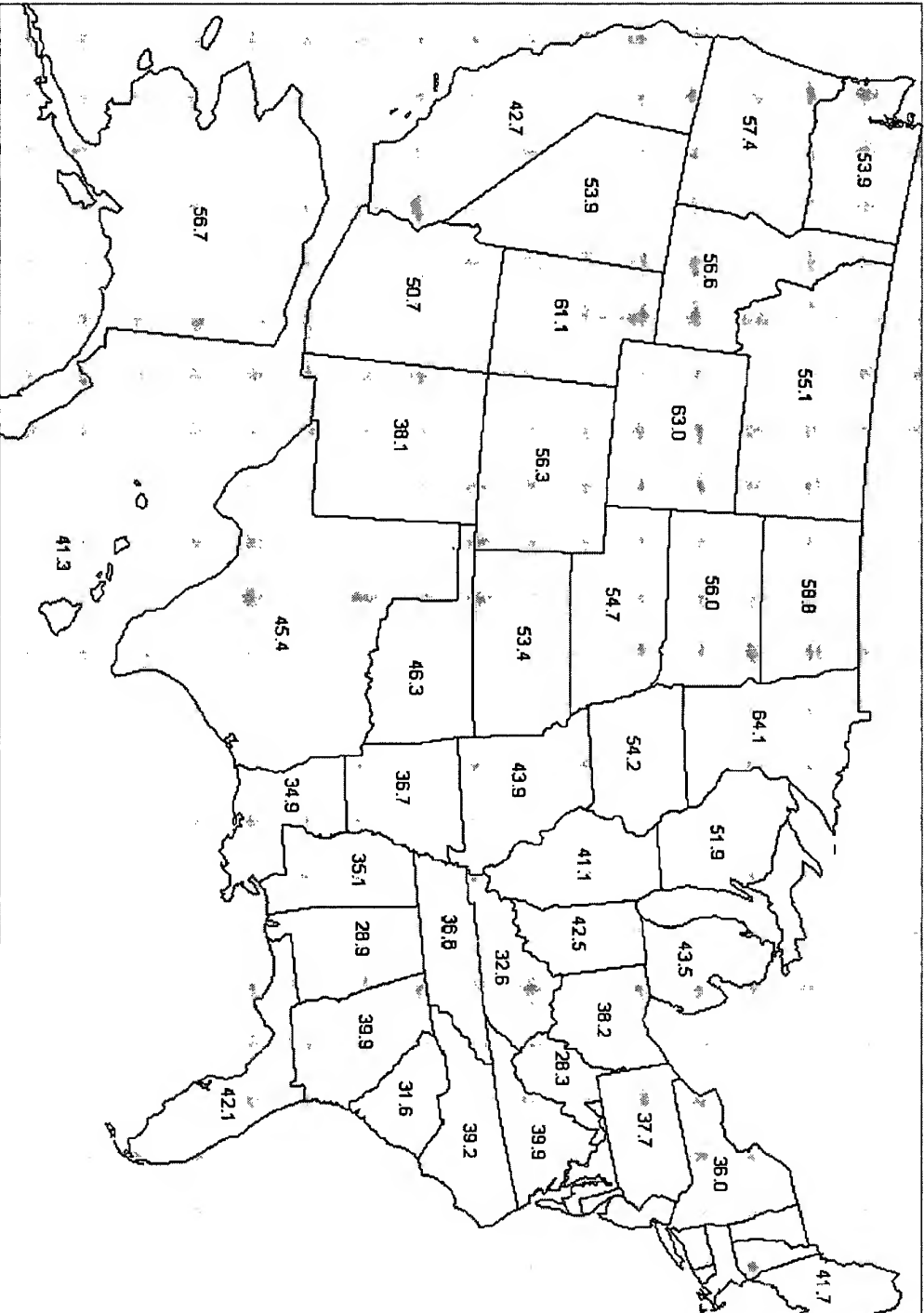
<sup>7</sup> Further information about the employment provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 can be found on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity web site: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/rehab.html>.

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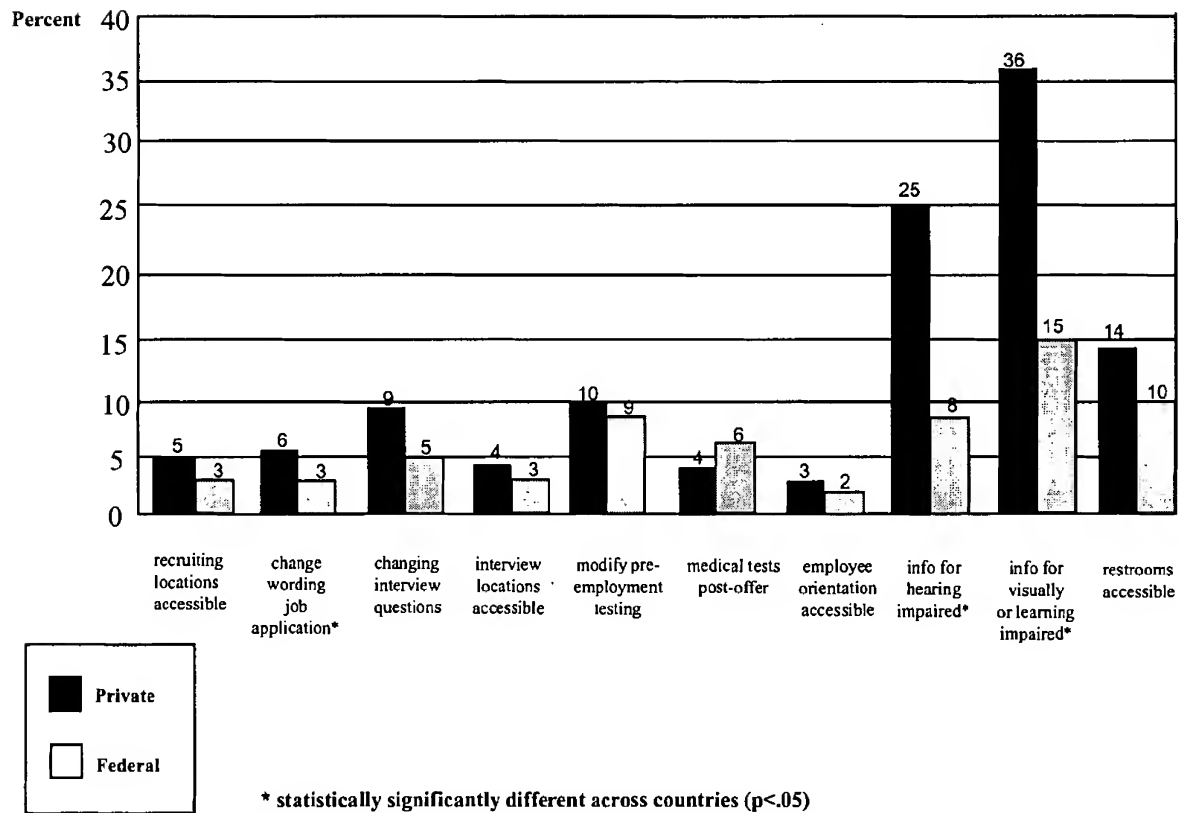
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Figure 1: Relative Employment Rates of Non-Institutionalized Civilian Men with Disabilities aged 25 through 61 for Each State and the District of Columbia over the Period of Employment Years 1980 through 1998

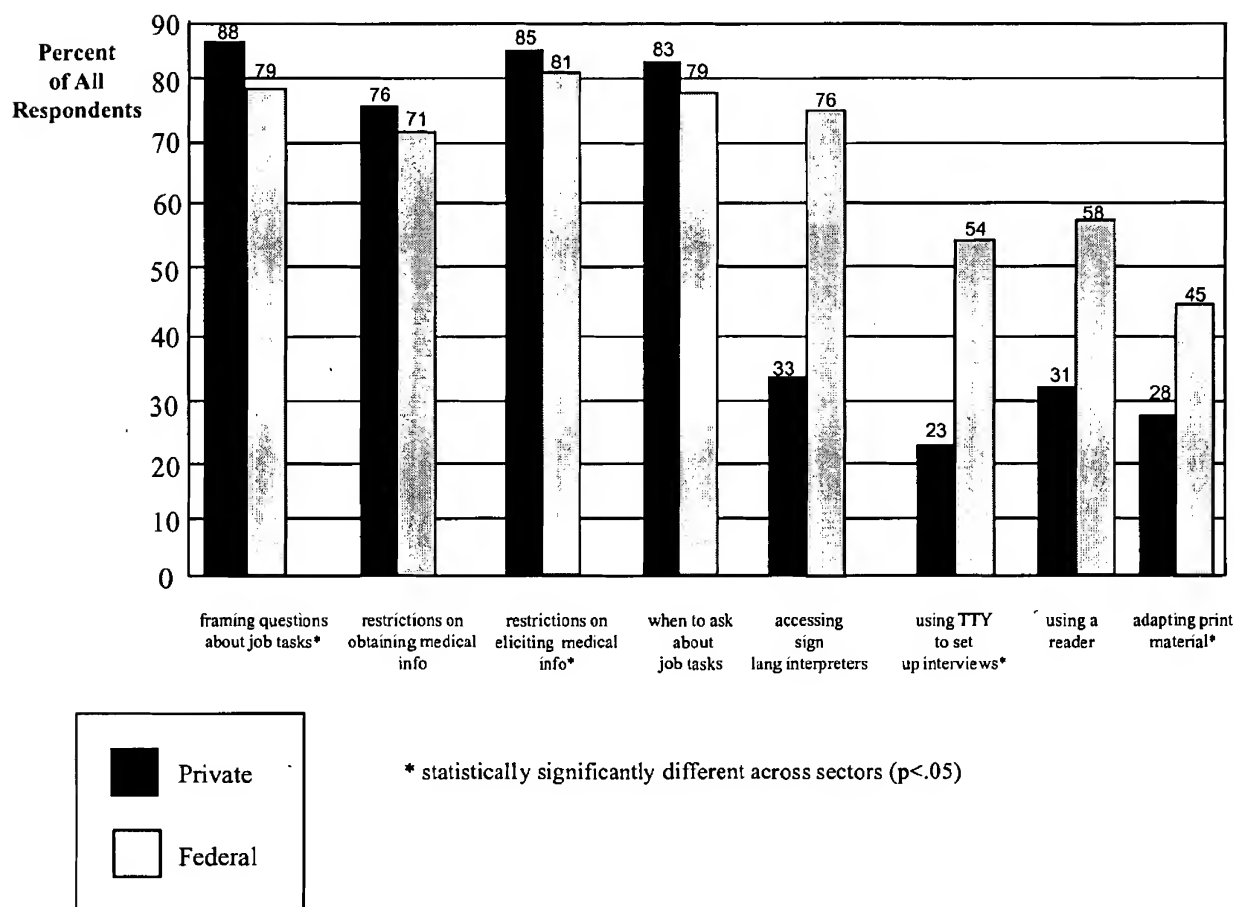


**Figure 2** Percent Reporting Difficult or Very Difficult to Make Changes by Federal/Private Sectors (of Those Who Made Changes) (S2B1)



Note: between 10-60% of all organizations did not need to make these changes. Percentages also do not include those who were not able to make the change.

**Figure 3** Percent Reporting Familiar or Very Familiar with Applicant Interviewing Issues by Federal/Private Sectors (S2B3a-i)



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# **From Classrooms to Careers: The Senior Mastery Process at Henry Ford Academy**

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## **Introduction and Rationale**

The Henry Ford Academy is the nation's first charter school developed jointly by a global corporation, public education and a non-profit cultural institution. Designed to prepare students to be contributing members of society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Academy opened its doors in the fall of 1997 on site at the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. Henry Ford Academy was conceived, developed and implemented by Ford Motor Company and Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, and chartered by Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency. In its first year, the Academy welcomed the first class of 100 ninth grade students representing more than 23 communities throughout Wayne County. This year there are 412 students enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The Academy graduated its first senior class on June 3, 2001. This past spring the Academy received its North Central Accreditation.

The Senior Mastery Process stands out as a one-of-a-kind program because of the full support of the learning community, including the Academy and its partners, its mission to create a challenging Senior Year as the culminating event in a student's life, its integration into the four-year curricular plan of the Academy and its connections to research-based methods of teaching and learning. The primary purpose of the Senior Mastery Process (SMP) is to provide students with the opportunity to learn through experience in an environment where they make valuable connections between learning in the classroom and learning beyond school. As such, the sum of the student's experiences throughout the SMP has the potential to encourage dramatic student growth, both personal and academic.

During the student's senior year the SMP culminates in an intensive work-based internship in a career of interest, an academically rigorous research project, and a formal defense of the overall experience and individual research findings to a formal review committee. This series of experiences is preceded by prerequisites, which prepare students to succeed at each phase. While the SMP formally begins during a student's Junior Year, ninth graders gain their initial exposure to career options through an extensive Job Shadowing Project, which will be used as a foundation for further investigation in the tenth grade.

The staff of Henry Ford Academy firmly believes that all students should be held to high academic and learning standards. Therefore, all graduates of the Academy must

successfully complete the Senior Mastery Process. We also recognize that all students are at different levels of development and have different learning and work styles. For this reason, we incorporate a variety of ways for students to meet those expectations, a significant commitment of staff time and resources to support individual needs, and the positive, active involvement of every member of the instructional staff in the process. We also realize that many students select careers which are popular in the media or with which they have a personal connection. To open their eyes truly to exploration, we have all Juniors work with the Michigan Occupational Information Survey program, considering their current interests, academic background, strengths and interests in further education as they select a career on which to focus. Finally, since the Senior Practicum is a direct extension of the Academy curriculum, all liability issues compare to those associated with students on campus and the placement is not compensated.

The foundation partners of the Senior Mastery Process include Ford Motor Company (FMC), Henry Ford Museum (HFM) & Greenfield Village (GV), and the Wayne County Regional Educational Services Agency (WCRESA). These partners have demonstrated their support in a variety of ways which reflect their individual resources, but which also demonstrate their absolute commitment to improving the educational opportunities for young people in their community. FMC and HFM & GV provide direct financial and staff support, have assisted with the concept and design of the overall program, participate in the implementation of the program at their sites, offer critical feedback and are facilitating with the evaluation and dissemination of the SMP. WCRESA has assisted with the development and dissemination of the program ideas to local administrators and curriculum directors.

In addition, the SMP draws on the diverse opportunities offered by a large group of Adult Partners, which includes members from myriad career fields and locations in the community. So far, we have placed 176 Academy seniors in each of our two graduating classes in individual placements with over 150 partners. As developing networking skills is a requirement for all students, many bring their Adult Partners into the program themselves. Other students work with Adult Partners associated with the foundation partners or introduced by the Practicum Coordinator.

While the SMP has been specifically designed to benefit Academy students, we believe that it is not exclusive to our particular situation or combination of partners. After having met with a variety of people from different groups and organizations, we have identified three groups that are most likely to benefit from an introduction to the program and its benefits for the learning community. The most obvious audience is educators currently involved in delivering curriculum to students. This may include superintendents, principals, teachers, vocational education coordinators, and technical and career preparation directors. The second key group is centered in the local business community: the local Chamber of Commerce, branch offices of regional or national corporations, government agencies, owners and employees of area businesses to name just a few. Finally, a third key group is university educators interested in partnering with local education agencies or in adapting the program to fit their own curricular needs.

## **The Senior Mastery Process: Background and Description of the Program**

Prior to the first days of class, the Academy's curriculum design team researched existing programs which challenged the traditional approach to secondary school education and which encouraged students to engage in profound, rigorous and individualized educational experiences. Two sources had a significant impact on the development of the original vision for the Academy and continue to inform our efforts to create a quality learning community for students. First, the team read and discussed *Horace's School*, by Ted Sizer. From it we drew our focus on designing a smaller learning community in which all students would be engaged, would undertake significant, individualized research projects and authentic assessment, and would therefore be active participants in their own growth. The second source, *The Power of Their Ideas*, by Deborah Meier, influenced the development of the Academy overall and the Senior Mastery Process most directly. We adapted several of the components of the third phase of the curriculum of the Central Park East Secondary School for inclusion in the SMP. Additionally, we were inspired by the stories of personal commitment and dramatic effort on the part of the entire staff to build a school that provided a quality educational and personal experience for all students who came through the doors. As we have come to realize, the work never ends.

In June 2000, the National Commission on the High School Senior Year was created. The following year the Commission issued the first draft of a report, which outlined several problems associated with the traditional senior year in high school and which was summarized in "Rethinking the Senior Year" by David Conley in the National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, May 2001. He wrote that students have lost interest in school by their senior year. They spend more time working and socializing than studying, despite claiming to understand the importance of a good education. These adolescent tendencies are exacerbated by the significant challenges of the traditional educational system itself: limited capacity for change, lack of qualified teachers and counselors, widespread student tracking, low expectations for student achievement, inadequate assessment systems and a sense that learning needs to happen in the classroom during the academic school year (Conley, 2001). This report and others with similar conclusions reconfirmed that the Senior Mastery Process responded to our own conclusions from empirical evidence—seniors tend to be bored and waste their time at the very moment when they need to stay focused on their long-term goals and life plans.

### **The Senior Mastery Process**

The Senior Mastery Process was developed based on the belief that students must have opportunities to link what they are learning in school to the real world. This belief has been a strong conviction of the staff of the Henry Ford Academy since its inception. The primary purpose of the SMP is to provide students with an opportunity to learn through experience in an environment where they can make valuable connections between learning in the classroom and learning beyond school. The goal is to enable them to become self-initiating learners by:

- Gaining an awareness of various career and educational opportunities;
- Investigating their career interests and individual learning and work styles;
- Developing their own Senior Mastery Research and Product plans;
- Networking in the community to identify a challenging, supportive Practicum Placement;
- Gathering hard and empirical data related to their research question in a supervised, work-based learning experience;
- Evaluating what they learned “on-the-job” and through their research in a final reflection paper;
- Presenting their findings and defending them to a committee of peers and involved adults from the staff and the community.

This experience is designed to assist students in developing an awareness of the skills and attitudes required to function as productive, contributing members of the community. It enables students to be involved in real-life problem solving, in which they are regarded as valuable and contributing individuals whose ideas, opinions and suggestions are respected and taken seriously.

The Senior Mastery Process is a four-part program, which includes the Junior Workshop, the Senior Practicum, the Senior Workshop and the Senior Defense. It is designed to be taught in ten-week seminars for a 4x4 block schedule but can easily be adapted to a more traditional schedule with a twenty-week semester.

### **Junior Workshop**

The Junior Workshop is a ten-week course that is required for all Juniors. It is an individualized seminar to help students develop the focus, materials, skills and plan for completing the Senior Practicum, Senior Workshop and the Senior Defense. Successful completion is a pre-requisite for entering the Senior Practicum. There are four components: Learning about Self, Learning about Careers, Learning Job Search Skills and Developing a Professional Portfolio.

- In *Learning about Self*, students explore their personal character traits and discover how those can impact their performance in school and in their future endeavors. They also explore the effectiveness of various methods of communication.
- In *Learning about Careers*, students investigate possible career choices using the Michigan Occupational Information Services (MOIS). Through their research, students identify a career of interest and design a timeline of the requirements for seeking a job in a particular career pathway.
- In *Learning Job Search Skills*, students write an effective, professional resume and participate in an “interview by committee” with members of the local business community who then debrief the experience with the students. Networking for potential Adult Partners for the Practicum Placement completes this segment.
- In *Developing a Professional Portfolio*, students create a comprehensive portfolio, which contains many of their reflective and descriptive papers,

their autobiography, a personal mission statement, their resume and other documents developed throughout the term.

### **Senior Practicum**

The Senior Practicum is the second part of the program and the pre-requisite for Senior Workshop. Students complete 75 hours of field work over a ten-week period in a career area they have researched and identified as a possible future career. Students work with Adult Partners in the workplace who provide meaningful learning opportunities for the students.

During this time students are required to write daily/weekly reflections on their work experience and its connection to their individual research question developed in Junior Workshop. They are also to gather specific data through a survey of their colleagues or through individual interviews. Students document their participation and attendance in the Senior Practicum Portfolio, shared weekly with the Practicum Coordinator and other students in the seminar. Finally, students review traditional sources of information for additional research and begin designing and developing their Senior Mastery Product which will help them communicate their findings from their research during their Defense.

### **Senior Workshop**

After successfully completing the Senior Practicum, students enter Senior Workshop. This ten-week course has three major components: the Senior Mastery Process Paper, the development of the Senior Mastery Product and preparation for the Senior Defense. The SMP Paper is an 18-20 page self-reflection essay in which students are asked to reflect on their preparation during Junior Workshop, the learning and challenges they experienced in the Senior Practicum, the results of their research process, and the impact of the SMP on them. In their SMP Product students develop a creative product, which demonstrates what they have learned during the entire Senior Mastery Process. Students can draw on their unique talents to present their learning and findings through a model, developed software or programs, dramatic presentations, explanatory video.

Students also prepare for their formal Defense by developing their overall presentation, any technological support, practicing their presentation with other students for feedback and setting the time and place of the Defense with their Committees. Successful completion of the elements of the Senior Workshop is required before students can schedule their Defense.

### **Senior Defense**

The Senior Defense is the culminating experience of the Senior Mastery Process. Before a committee of 6-8 adults, students give a 20-minute presentation in which they discuss their Practicum, the experiences they had with their Adult Partners, present their research findings and exhibit their Senior Mastery Product. The committee then questions the student on his/her methodology, conclusions and personal reflections having come through the SMP. Members of the Defense Committee typically include the Adult Partner, the Senior Practicum Coordinator and Senior Workshop Teacher, a teacher of choice, and student peers.

The experience concludes with a reception to honor the students' successful completion of the Senior Mastery Process.

### **Results of the Implementation**

Students are changed in a number of ways by their participation in the SMP. They:

- Demonstrate an increased level of independence, responsibility and self-confidence;
- Develop a more informed understanding of their selves
- Possess several important professional documents including a formal resume and portfolio;
- Recognize the elements of strong work-place etiquette and its importance to success;
- Have a realistic knowledge of what "work" is and the expectations of employers;
- Develop greater understanding of the importance of effective networking, communication, and on-the-job learning;
- Make informed decisions regarding post-secondary school education and employment.

The Senior Mastery Process is clearly aligned to meet the Career Content Standards as well as Michigan's career preparation goals and objectives as defined by the Department of Education. Through a series of authentic projects and experiences throughout the course of the SMP students are exposed to each of the nine stated standards and are expected to achieve a significant level of mastery as a requirement for graduation from the Academy. Choice is present at each stage of the Process with students selecting careers on which to focus their investigation and eventual research, networking to identify an Adult Partner in a Practicum of personal interest, creating an individualized manner in which to present their research findings and learning, and selecting their Defense Committee members. Students have identified such diverse Practicum Placements as modeling, cosmetology, dee-jaying at a radio station, media production, events planning, counseling, teaching, robotics, engineering, neurosurgery, construction management, fashion design, interior design, culinary arts and restaurant management, to name but a few.

There are three major outcomes to this program: first, the students come out of the experience having greater knowledge about potential careers and the daily responsibilities of professionals in those careers. Second, they are able to make informed decisions about whether or not to pursue a particular career or educational path. In many cases students find that they very much enjoy their first career choice and begin the process of actively preparing to enter that career. They seek out college programs or post-secondary opportunities related to that field. In other cases, students discover that they need to consider a different future; they may lack certain academic preparation, find that the daily grind is not interesting or identify a career they had not yet considered because of a lack of exposure. Third, they have gained experience in real-world problem solving with reasoned professional adults where they are treated as true members of the team.

We know this program is effective for several reasons. Several companies have

hired students for summer positions following the completion of their Practicums or have offered others paid internships often reserved for college students. We have had excellent and consistent feedback from our partners about what they liked and what they felt needed to be changed to improve the program. Parents and students have also communicated their positive opinions and constructive criticisms about the SMP overall and their recognition of the individual growth each has experienced with this process. This feedback is especially important since the SMP continues to be a work in progress. Finally, students utilize their awareness of what employers want, labor market trends and workplace expectations immediately as they continue their extra-curricular jobs and seek out further opportunities in their fields of interest. They have also incorporated their new knowledge and experience into their research for appropriate college and/or university programs, community service opportunities, public service appointments or immediate employment.

The SMP is designed to meet a wide variety of student and partner needs in ways, which draw on the unique strengths that each brings to the entire experience. Early in the process, those who participate gain a shared understanding of what work means to each and the ways in which professionals move from school to work. Later, students and Adult Partners alike develop meaningful relationships in the context of the Practicum, share their unique perspectives on work and school, increase each other's comfort level and understanding of the other as well as promote strong ties within the community. Many of the employers of the Adult Partners also gain the opportunity to enhance their corporate citizenship, play a significant role in the development of the future work force and further their commitment to the community as a whole.

### **Replication of the Senior Mastery Process**

The Henry Ford Academy explicitly considers replication of unique elements of its curriculum to be an inherent part of its mission. Currently, the staff at Henry Ford Academy is actively involved in preparing for the replication of the Senior Mastery Process. This past summer, we developed the specific curriculum materials—an Introduction, a Teacher Handbook with lesson plans and master copies for all student materials and a Student Handbook—and began defining the potential audience for our program. Currently we are formatting the content and materials for distribution on CD-ROMs in partnership with Ford Motor Company. We have also been working with the FAMS program (Ford Academies of Manufacturing Sciences) to facilitate their potential adoption of the program as an addition to their curriculum and with Wayne County RESA to gain an understanding of the needs other schools would have in putting such a program in place. Those discussions have addressed implementing the entire SMP as well as possibly using only the initial phases of our program. Finally, we are exploring grants and other sources of funding which would help us provide staff and resources for the express purpose of helping other teachers and schools adopt the Senior Mastery Process.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The Senior Mastery Process at Henry Ford Academy is an innovative, challenging program of career exploration and research project for high school seniors. Beginning with

initial job shadowing and interviewing experiences in the ninth grade, Academy students gradually gain an awareness of career demands and opportunities through a curriculum designed to open their eyes and provide them with the chance to experience first hand the world of work. By their senior year, they have researched careers, developed a professional portfolio, assessed their personal strengths, participated in an extended internship, researched a topic of interest related to their career of interest, developed a project which naturally fits with that career and defended their research findings in a formal presentation to an evaluation committee.

The SMP thus encourages students to take charge of their education so that they can ultimately achieve their individual goals for further education and/or employment. Students are fully supported in their efforts to achieve the high expectations at every step of the way by the carefully developed curriculum, the teachers instructing the courses, the Practicum Coordinator, the entire staff of the Academy as mentors and coaches, the Adult Partners, parents and peers. Through the SMP students gain a sense of both personal achievement and academic success at an individualized level. While there continue to be obstacles to implementing this complex and demanding program, we feel that the benefits far outweigh those challenges.

The true test of the program however lies in its impact on student growth and achievement. With only two classes of students having completed the major components and successfully matriculated, we have to rely on empirical data, observations and personal comments to evaluate the SMP initially. The wide range of careers experienced, the positive reflections from students in their final evaluations, the obvious skill development demonstrated in the final Defenses and the clear sense of personal pride in a challenge met and a job well-done confirm the value of the Senior Mastery Process.

The Senior Mastery Process is the capstone experience for all students at Henry Ford Academy. Incorporating many of the skills and content Academy students are expected to master in order to graduate from the Academy, the SMP transforms the senior experience into one that is academically and personally challenging. Interning, writing, researching, product creation, formal presentation and reflection all combine in a personalized program that starts and ends with the student himself/herself. Students who have successfully completed the SMP—all graduates of the Academy—have demonstrated tremendous affective growth as well. All have gained increased levels of personal responsibility, significant on-site career/work experience, strong decision making skills, a sense of pride in themselves and their accomplishments, greater comfort with adults and new or unfamiliar situations, and an understanding of the true need for life-long learning.

In addition to reinforcing students' self concept, completing the SMP has also helped create an awareness of the value of being a well-rounded and well-educated person with many and varied skills. The individualized nature of the SMP means that all students challenge themselves in ways that are appropriate to their strengths and weaknesses. They also receive commensurate support to ensure that they experience success in meeting those challenges. The work-based components of the program show that all learning does not happen in classrooms and is not the restricted privilege of academically successful students. For those students with that history of good grades on tests and positive feelings about class, it encourages them to achieve in new, more authentic, ways. For those students whose



strengths lie in interpersonal communication, creative problem solving, development of new ideas and projects, to name a few, the SMP reinforces the value of those skills and talents in the larger society outside of school.

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### Student Reflections on the Senior Practicum

"I truly enjoyed my Practicum. I think this makes people really follow their dreams and see what it is really all about....I was treated like part of the team and I will continue to work with them."

Felicita, Recording Artist, Senior, 2002

"I feel that I am very lucky to have had the chance to work in the field of Pharmacy....At first I was scared to try anything because I was afraid that I would mess something up. With the help of my Adult Partner and the people that worked there, I overcame my fear."

Madona, Pharmacist, Senior, 2002

"In my senior practicum there are things that I liked, disliked, and within that there are many

things that I learned which will have a great impact on me in the future. (At times) I felt that I may have been missing something (at my practicum), however upon reflection I did not go to my practicum to do someone's work, I went to learn and it was a learning experience indeed."

Joe, Automotive Engineer, Senior, 2002

"When I first heard about senior practicum, I was very intimidated. I thought it seemed too difficult and some of the strictest teachers in the school were overseeing it....I enjoyed my practicum experience very much."

Andrea, Physical Therapist, Senior, 2002

"It was a rewarding experience. An all around great endeavor."

Adult Partner, 2002

"Time is always an issue. If students could have the chance to spend more "full" days or "half" days on the job, they may get a truer picture of on-the-job responsibilities."

Adult Partner, 2002

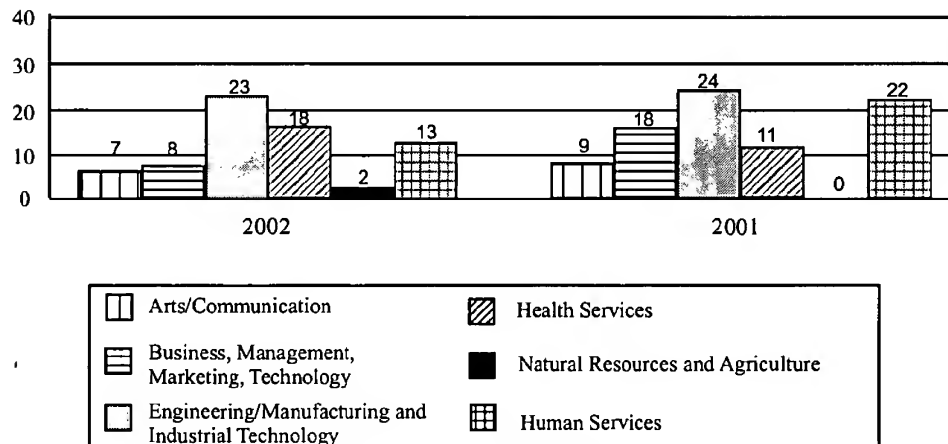
"I think the program is well-thought out. I would have enjoyed more flexibility on schedule days since my schedule is unpredictable. I know the student's are still doing a regular school day."

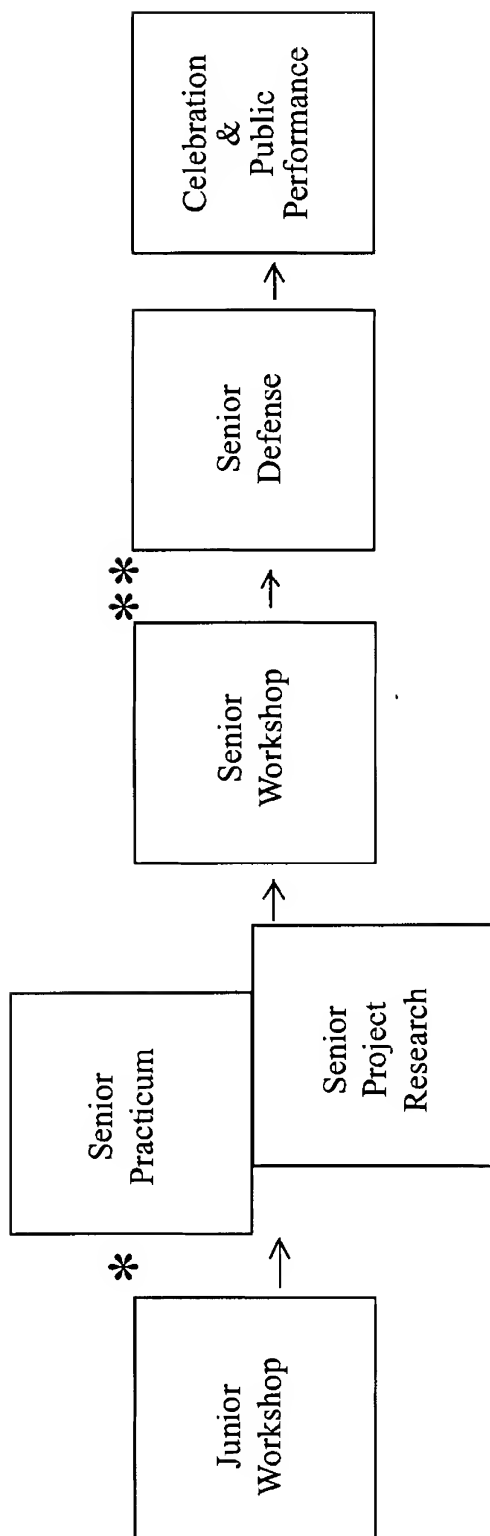
Adult Partner, 2002

"It was a dream come true. I now have contacts for the future, and I plan to use what I learned to someday have a full time job at Ford Motor Company."

Neil, Marketing, Senior 2001

### Primary Career Pathways for Seniors





- Investigation of self, and career and educational interests.
- Development of professional portfolio and job search skills
- Determination of Senior Practicum Placement
- Out of school, work-based, learning experience
- Development of research focus question and data collection
- Required Reflection Journal and work site documentation
- Academic exploration on self chosen research question
- Analysis of collected data/info from research and Practicum
- 18-20 page reflection paper on research process
- Design and creation of senior mastery product to demonstrate learning
- Preparation for Senior Defense
- Presentation of Senior Mastery product and learning to Defense Committee for final evaluation and acceptance
- Public display or performance of Senior Mastery Products to larger audience
- Recognition and celebration of tremendous accomplishment

\* Mandatory Practicum Orientation  
 \*\* Mandatory Defense Practice Presentation

# Working With Undecided College Students

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## Introduction

The perennial problem of college students' indecision regarding their future career is well documented in the professional counseling literature. Gordon (1998) in a thorough literature review of this topical issue was able to identify four categories of undecided students: tentatively undecided; developmentally undecided; seriously undecided and chronically undecided. Tentatively undecided students are close to making a career decision as some have already identified career options but may need additional information or time before committing to a specific option. The developmentally undecided group is described as those in need of a better understanding of themselves and also desiring heightened awareness of their career possibilities. Seriously undecided students may experience moderate to debilitating levels of anxiety about making a career choice. The anxiety may be attributable to perfectionistic tendencies or the belief that some expert or authority must make the decision for them. Chronically undecided students exhibit excessive and severe anxiety about making a career choice. Consequently, they may choose to postpone making a decision or avoid thinking about making up their minds regarding their future careers.

In view of the above discussion about undecided college students, it is important to outline effective intervention strategies for working with this group of students. It may also be noted that Vogt's (1998) study was one of the efforts designed to help undecided college students. The results of this study revealed that majority of the undecided students were able to identify a career of interest to them. There is, however, a necessity to build on the work done by Vogt (1998). Hence, the main purpose of this paper is to outline practical effective strategies for counseling undecided college students. Another goal of this article is to highlight relevant career counseling strategies for working with culturally different, undecided college students. Krumboltz's (1992) Learning Theory of Career Counseling is used as a framework for describing these strategies.

## Krumboltz Learning Theory of Career Counseling

Briefly, this theory stipulates that the process of career development involves four factors: genetic endowments and special abilities; environmental conditions and events; learning experiences and task approach skills. The thrust of this discussion relative to counseling undecided college students will be on the last three factors.

Krumboltz (1992) noted that (based on learning experiences) people form generalizations or beliefs in an attempt to represent their own reality. Two types of generalizations were identified. The first was the self-observation generalizations, which are generalizations about oneself especially with respect to one's attitudes, skills and self

concept. An example of this may be a first generation Mexican American immigrant, first year college student, who abdicated a desire to continue a college education because of language problems. This trend of thought may lead to a serious consideration of dropping out of college. This irrational conclusion may have been due to a disappointing grade on a test in one course. The second type of generalizations identified by Krumboltz is the worldview generalizations. These are generalizations about environment, especially with respect to the nature of various occupations. An example will be a college student with physical disability (in a wheelchair) who decided not to explore a budding interest in medicine because of lack of awareness of any practicing medical doctors in a wheelchair. Krumboltz argued that if such generalizations go unchallenged, that there is a risk that viable career options may go unexplored. It is, therefore, very important for counselors to challenge such a group of students to examine how their learning experiences and related assumptions may have impacted their thinking about careers. Krumboltz's (1994) Career Belief Inventory is a good tool for facilitating this process.

Regarding environmental factors, it is important for counselors to become aware of occupational fields that are in decline and those that are on the rise. Undoubtedly, this kind of information will be helpful for undecided students in making their career choice. Useful information sources for identifying these fields include the Occupational Outlook Handbook, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, and O\*NET.

Task approach skills according to Krumboltz (1992) deal with sets of skills that a person has developed e.g., problem-solving skills and work habits. In order to enhance these skills relative to career development of undecided students, it is important that counselors help the students develop a good understanding of themselves and the world of work. The following are useful strategies for attaining this goal:

- The use of pertinent assessment tools that measure interests, skills, values, personality etc. Counselors will find this resource - *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments* by Kapes and Whitefield (2001) useful for identifying assessment tools that they may need for assessing the various traits.
- The use of computerized career guidance systems e.g., SIGI, DISCOVER for both self-assessment and exploration of occupational fields.
- Connect students with positive role models working in various and different occupational and professional fields.
- Encourage students to do informational interviews and shadow persons in the fields that may appeal to them. These experiences may help decrease some of their fears, anxiety and also challenge their irrational beliefs about the fields, and perhaps their own self-efficacy issues.

### **Implications for Career Counseling of Undecided Culturally Diverse Students**

The term "culturally diverse" is defined broadly to include marginalized members of the society such as persons of color; members of the gay community and persons with disability. The use of relevant role models (by encouraging the students to read relevant autobiographies or utilizing bibliotherapy) in challenging students' negative learning experiences is useful. It is also suggested that counselors develop a list of local professionals

of color in various desirable career fields as a resource that could be made available to undecided students for informational or shadowing purposes (Okocha, 1995).

Additionally, it is essential that counselors ensure that the assessment tools being used for students of color meet the appropriate psychometric standards e.g., validity, reliability and normative requirements. Also, counselors are encouraged to incorporate informal assessment strategies (Okocha, 1999) in their intervention plans. Specifically, utilizing The Multicultural Career Counseling Checklist (Ward & Bingham, 1993) will be helpful in alerting the counselor to possible cross-cultural issues relative to value and worldview differences. Finally, the counselor's role as an advocate for this group of students cannot be overemphasized. For instance, counselor's advocacy for the students relative to meaningful placement for externship and internship experiences is critical for facilitating effective career decision.

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# Using the Self-Directed Search Career Explorer with Middle School Students: The Practicality of Holland's RIASEC Theory

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## Introduction

Few career counseling theories have had the long-standing background of Holland's RIASEC theory. His theory, which espouses that job satisfaction increases when there is congruence between individuals' interests and environments, has resulted in many practical, reliable and valid inventories, such as the Self-Directed Search (SDS). The majority of Holland's tools and related studies have focused on high school, college and adult individuals, with a paucity of studies (i.e., two) reporting on the use of SDS with middle school students. The purpose of this manuscript is to provide information on the process and outcomes of using a theory-driven assessment tool, i.e., the Self-Directed Search Career Explorer, with middle school students.

Some may argue disagree with the appropriateness of administering such inventories to children whose vocational identity is far from being stabilized. Holland himself was at first reluctant to create an inventory for this age due to this issue, but decided to do so when he discovered that practitioners were using Form E of the SDS (for adults with reading difficulties) and other inventories with questionable psychometric power for this purpose (Reardon & Lenz, 1998). The reality is that most children must begin making choices during middle school as to which track they will follow in high school. In addition, some states require some type of career assessment as part of developing an individual educational/career plan. A reliable, valid tool that assesses this group's interests provides a framework for helping this population (middle and junior high) make such decisions. Unfortunately, very few valid and reliable interest/career inventories for this population exist.

According to the manual (1994), the SDS was developed with two main purposes: first, to increase the number of clients that a counselor can help, and second, "to provide a career counseling experience for people who do not have, or who do not wish to have, access to a vocational counselor" (p.1). In addition, a strong impetus behind Holland's desire to create the SDS was to create an inexpensive, valid and reliable tool that could be self-administered, self-scored and self-interpreted (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1994). Other benefits include the translation from theory to practice, an easy-to-understand theory, and an organizational framework (Rayman & Atanasoff, 1999).

The main tenet of Holland's theory is that career choice and satisfaction is determined by the degree to which an individual's interests match with his or her educational or work environment. Through many factor analytic procedures and studies, Holland identified six primary modal types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.

Each type has a corresponding environment with similar characteristics. For example, an "Artistic type" person is probably very creative and independent, and thus an artistic environment would provide opportunities for creativity and independence. The other types can be briefly described as follows: Realistic types tend to enjoy hands-on or outdoor activities; Investigative types enjoy researching scientific or medical type questions; Social types enjoy helping or nurturing people; Enterprising types enjoy managing and directing people or sales; and Conventional types enjoy working with or managing numbers or data.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Ninety-eight middle school students from a southeastern middle school returned permission forms to be included in career counseling groups (fourteen groups total) and to participate in research. Of the 98, 91 (41 males, 50 females) completed the SDS in its entirety. The majority were African American (95%) and on free/reduced lunch programs. This demographic was similar to that of the school as a whole, which reports that 98% of its students are involved in free/reduced lunch programs. This middle school was the recipient of a five year GEAR-UP grant, which has as its goal increasing the number of middle school students who stay in school, eventually graduate high school and obtain some type of post-secondary training.

### ***Instrument***

The SDS Career Explorer (SDS-CE) for middle school students was chosen because of its psychometric properties and appropriateness for use with this age level. Similar in format to the SDS Form R, the inventory has high reliability (greater than .91) and assesses interests and competencies, resulting in a code that is then linked to occupations. It differs in the wording used, such as "jobs" versus "occupations" and "skills" versus "competencies." In addition, in the job section, where individuals respond to a yes/no question about whether they would consider that occupation, descriptions of each job are given. Finally, a two-letter code is used instead of the three letter code associated with other SDS versions. The SDS-CE is accompanied by the Careers Booklet and a booklet to aid in self-interpretation entitled "You and Your Job." A computer-generated report, entitled "SDS Career Explorer Interpretive Report," is also available (Reardon, 1994) and was utilized in this research. Middle school students appear to enjoy using the SDS-CE. In a study conducted by Jones, Sheffield and Joyner (2000), middle school students responded as favorably to the SDS-CE as to two other middle school instruments (Career Key and Job-OE).

### ***Procedures***

A six week, 30 minutes-per-session format was utilized based on general group counseling principles and to allow for the application of a specific career counseling theory, Cognitive Information Processing Theory (CIP; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon & Lenz, 1996; <http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter>). CIP theory identifies four main components as being involved in career choices: knowledge about self, knowledge about options, decision making and metacognitions (how one thinks about one's decision making). One week was allotted per CIP component, with a week at the front for introductions and to administer the SDS-CE



and a week at the end for closure. Small groups were formulated from large group classrooms. For example, an art class containing 25 students would be divided into three small groups that would alternate times with a group leader within an hour and a half period of time.

During the first week, introductions were made, confidentiality discussed, and the purpose of the meetings described. The four components of CIP were introduced, using a picture of a pyramid (Sampson, Peterson, Reardon & Lenz, 1992). It was explained that the first discussions would center on self-knowledge. After a brief description of the role of the self-knowledge, the SDS-CE was administered, with this researcher reading the items aloud. The time needed to complete the SDS-CE exceed the time allotted; thus, the administration of the assessment continued in following sessions until the instrument was completed for all students, at which time, their scores were entered into the SDS-CE Interpretive Report computer program (Reardon, 1994) and personal reports generated for each student.

These reports were handed back to the students and discussed in the following session, and students were encouraged to narrow their options by crossing off items that were not attractive to them. To further build upon self-knowledge, this researcher asked the students to write a reason they were crossing off next to each occupation they eliminated. They were also instructed to place a question mark next to occupations they were uncertain about, or for which they needed additional information. During the next session, students met in the media center and were shown how to use various internet-based career information sites, such as the online *Occupational Outlook Handbook* to help narrow options further and increase occupational knowledge. The following week focused on a decision-making strategy and a discussion/game centering on the impact of self-talk on goals. The six weeks concluded with a discussion of what students had learned with respect to self-knowledge and the other components of the CIP model.

### **Data Analysis**

Data from the participants' SDS results were entered into SPSS to identify frequency of typology and to assess for type differences between genders. One-way Analyses of Variance were conducted to determine the presence of significant mean differences. In addition, reliability analyses for the six scales were also conducted.

### **Results**

The two most common primary types by gender were Artistic (N=13; 32%) and Realistic (N=10; 24%) for boys, and Social (N=19; 73%) and Artistic (N=16; 32%) for girls. Using the total scores for each of the six types (RIASEC) as dependent variables, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with gender as the between-subjects factor. A main effect was found for two of the dependent variables: Realistic  $F(1, 89) = 23.658, p < .0001$ ; and Social  $F(1, 89) = 6.369, p < .05$ . Men had higher mean scores on the Realistic scale ( $M = 23.24, SD = 13.61$ ) as compared to women ( $M = 11.92, SD = 8.40$ ), while women had higher Social scale scores ( $M = 31.18, SD = 11.80$ ) as compared to men ( $M = 24.93, SD = 11.71$ ). Investigative was the second most common type for males in the normative sample. These results are also similar to those reported for college students and adults (Holland, Fritzsche & Powell, 1994). An additional ANOVA was conducted with the

sub-scales' totals (Activities, Skills, Careers, Abilities 1 and Abilities 2) used as dependent variables and gender as the between-subjects factor. No significant differences were found. In addition, reliability analyses were conducted on the total scale for each primary type. Internal consistency reports included: Realistic (.86), Investigative (.78), Artistic (.82), Social (.83), Enterprising (.84) and Conventional (.83).

## Discussion

This section describes the process and outcomes of using the SDS-CE with middle school students. When the first groups were run, the administration of the SDS was scheduled to take place during the first two sessions. However, given the short amount of time within the sessions, students were still completing the inventory during the third and fourth sessions. Adjustments were made for future groups to complete the SDS prior to the first career counseling session and with an extended period of time (i.e., 90 minutes). This adjustment allowed for the profiles to be scored and reports generated (and thus available) for the first counseling session. This practice proved to be much more effective, and practical, and was continued for subsequent groups. In addition, having the group leader walking among the students and reading the items aloud also proved to be a useful strategy in minimizing the random response patterns and mistakes. It also allowed the group leader to begin each section of the SDS with a brief discussion as to why interests or self-estimates are important considerations in career choice. Therefore, a recommendation is made that when using the SDS-CE as a component of group career counseling, the group leader should schedule the administration of the SDS-CE prior to the groups' beginning, allowing sufficient time for completion. In addition, reading the items aloud is also recommended for students similar to those described in this study.

The coupling of the SDS-CE with CIP theory provided an easy-to-understand framework for the career counseling groups' content and process. The SDS-CE results enhanced self-knowledge, as well as a list of occupations from which students could increase their occupational knowledge. Through the process of crossing off unwanted occupations, question-marking and highlighting additional occupations, the SDS-CE was "hands-on" material from which students were able to practice decision-making skills. Finally, talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the six types also led to a discussion of how to identify and decrease negative self-talk and increase positive self-talk.

At the conclusion of the six week group career counseling experience, anecdotal comments from students indicated that they had learned about their interests, occupations, post-secondary opportunities, decision making approach, and how to improve their self-talk. In addition, many stated that they found the groups enjoyable, and that they would prefer the sessions to be longer in terms of time and the number of sessions. The most common negative statements had to do with physical space, such as room location. These statements seem to suggest that many of the following needs identified by Sears (1995) were being met: the ability to identify personal traits such as interests and skills; to know the difference across main occupational areas; to know about educational options relating to career choice; to recognize what future decisions will need to be made for goal success; and to create appropriate long and short term educational goals. This intervention also is reflective

of career development competencies for middle school students as outlined by the National Career Development Association and the National Occupation Information Coordinating Committee. Based on these observations, a recommendation is made to couch the use of the SDS within a larger framework of career theory and experience (instead of a "test and tell," one shot classroom guidance approach). In this experience, using the SDS within the CIP approach and using that theory to structure the six week groups were very successful.

Statistical analyses of students' SDS-CE reports showed that the six scales (e.g., Realistic, Investigative) each have strong internal consistency for this group of middle school students. In addition, no differences were found with respect to the subscales scores when compared by gender. However, gender differences were found on the total scale scores for Realistic and Social. Holland et al. (1994) noted a similar trend in the 1994 normative sample of the SDS with high school students, with 39% of males having Realistic as their main type (as opposed to 2.7% of women). In addition, 45.7% of women had Social as their primary type (as opposed to 10.5% of men).

There are several implications of this study. First, these results suggest that the SDS-CE is a psychometrically sound instrument for this group. Second, males and females respond similarly to the majority of the items, suggesting that there is limited gender bias in the SDS-CE. Third, these middle school students seemed to lean toward "traditional" typology to some degree, with girls choosing characteristics more indicative of helping, and boys choosing characteristics more characteristic of "hands-on." This could be an indication of gender bias, as some might suggest, but could also be a reflection of sex role socialization (Holland, 1994).

Regardless of the reason, counselors can continue to expose middle school students to men and women employed in non-traditional jobs through the use of strategically planned career days, pointing out examples in the media, and through having students do research on non-traditional occupations. These results are based on one group of students from one school, with the majority of students being African American. Therefore, the results may be limited in terms of generalizability to other middle school students from different ethnic groups or in different locations. A strong recommendation is made for additional research to be conducted with the SDS-CE to determine if the results found in this study are specific only to this school and this particular group of middle school students, or are common across locales and student populations.

## **Conclusion**

This study was an exploratory investigation into the impact of using the Self-Directed Search and CIP theory with middle school career counseling groups. Thus, several limitations exist. First, the study was conducted with students from one school that was mostly African American, of lower socio-economic status, and mostly high risk students. This middle school has the highest percentage of students on free or reduced lunch schedule in the county, as well as having a higher percentage of African American and Latino students when compared to other schools in the county. Certainly, this is not the norm for middle schools in general, and therefore the generalizability of the results are somewhat limited. In addition, the SDS was administered differently than the standardization for the instrument, in some cases,

spanning over four group sessions. In addition, the administrator read the items aloud, which was not done in the instrument standardization process. These two adjustments might have jeopardized the reliability of the results.

Based on the results of fourteen separate career counseling groups utilizing the SDS-CE, and the statistical analyses results, it is concluded that the SDS-CE is a useful tool with this group of African American middle school students and its use is enhanced when coupled with CIP theory.

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# Granite School District's Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program in Action

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## Setting the Stage at the State Level

During the 1980s, there was a growing sense of concern with counseling and guidance in Utah's public secondary schools. Counselor numbers were not keeping pace with a rapidly growing student population. Pupil/counselor ratios rose from 430/1 to 550/1. In addition, the counselor's role was frequently debated, widely varied, and dominated by a myriad of duties and non-guidance activities. The counselor's job was not viewed as very attractive, counselor training institutions were producing very few counselors, and the shortage of trained counselors was so severe that certification requirements were significantly reduced for entry-level counselors.

Counselors in the state were frequently criticized for providing one-dimensional, "university bound" guidance to students, and vocational educators had become particularly dissatisfied with the lack of guidance for students seeking to pursue vocational and technical training, work-based learning options, and direct entry into the work force. Program administrators in the Utah State Office of Education and leaders of the local district vocational directors group believed dramatic measures were needed to restructure guidance in the state. They agreed to commit a percentage of federal, state, and local vocational education resources for guidance support. Tied to this commitment was a stipulation that guidance is established as a full-fledged education program. Development of the *Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance* ensued.

The *Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance* varies little from the Gysbers and Henderson model described in *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program* (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000) and the Missouri Model described in *Missouri Comprehensive Guidance: A Model for Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation* (Gysbers and Starr, 1993). However, Utah adopted the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) competencies (now known as the National Career Development Guidelines, NCDG) as its desired program content which focuses on student outcomes. While the comprehensive counseling and guidance program model adopted in Utah shares all of the major characteristics of the Gysbers/Henderson and the Missouri models, it is singularly unique in its statewide approach to implementation and the near universal adoption by the secondary schools of the state.

Critical evaluation of school counseling and guidance services and the development of the Utah model in the early 1990's has lead to a commitment to plan, deliver, and evaluate

a school comprehensive counseling and guidance program that focuses on: reaching 100 per cent of the student population; providing a programmatic approach to guidance; assuring accountability; eliminating non-guidance activities (clerical duties that could be done by non-certificated personnel); developing student competencies to address identified student needs; and defining the role of the school counselor within the comprehensive counseling and guidance program model.

Guidance is now recognized, state-wide, as a critical component of Utah's public educational system. Administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and communities view guidance as a vital component of every student's education. This was accomplished by developing a comprehensive counseling and guidance program for *all* students. By spring 2002, nearly all but a handful of Utah's secondary schools have committed to the model, have participated in training, and have met stringent program "standards," which qualify them to receive their share of \$7.4 million appropriated by the Utah State Legislature for the program. A collegial system of program management involving the State Office of Education, regional and district administrators, and a peer review process is used to ensure that each school's guidance program maintains fidelity to the very high program standards.

The program standards are supported by Utah State Board of Education Administrative Rules, R277-462-3: Comprehensive Guidance Program funds shall be distributed to districts for each school within the district that meet all of the following criteria: (a) local ***Board adoption and approval***; (b) documentation that a ***school advisory and steering committee*** have been organized and are functioning effectively; (c) a ***school-wide student/parent/teacher needs assessment*** completed within the last three years prior to the application deadline for funding; (c) evidence that ***80% of aggregate counselor time is devoted to DIRECT services to students*** through guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services; (d) a program that reflects a commitment that ***every student in the school shall benefit*** from the Comprehensive Guidance Program; (f) the establishment of the ***SEOP (Student Education Occupation Plan) requirement for ALL students as both a process and a product*** consistent with Board rules, the secondary core curriculum, and high school graduation requirements; (g) ***assistance for students in career exploration and development*** such as job seeking and finding skills and in post high school placement; (h) inclusion in the ***guidance curriculum activities*** for each of the twelve National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC)\* competencies (available from the state guidance specialist); (i) distribution to and ***discussion with feeder schools*** of the Comprehensive Guidance Program; and (j) ***sufficient district budget*** to adequately provide for guidance facilities, materials, equipment, and clerical support; and (k) all guidance team members and school administrators ***participate in state sponsored training*** (Utah State Board of education Administrative Rule R277-462-3).

### Setting the Stage at the Local District Level

Granite School District is located in the central suburban area of Salt Lake County, adjacent to Salt Lake City, Utah. Granite School District covers about 300 square miles and serves a wide variety of urban, suburban, commercial, and industrial communities including

*\*Competencies now known as the National Career Development Guidelines.*

West Valley City, Utah's second largest city. With more than 70,000 students, Granite is currently the second largest school district in the great state of Utah and is among the 30 largest districts in the nation. Granite School District provides a comprehensive educational program for students grades K through 12, with 90 school locations. The district is recognized nationally for academic excellence and innovative leadership.

In 1989, Kearns High School, one of the district's ten high schools, was selected as one of eleven "lead schools" identified by the Utah State Office of Education to participate in the development of a comprehensive approach to guidance. The small number of "lead schools" was selected to initiate the process and a supportive environment at both the school and school district level had to be in place in order to maximize the chances of a successful program implementation in the lead schools. Each of the eleven lead schools made a commitment to attend training each August for a three-year time period. The school principal and all counselors along with any other key individuals the school selected to attend participated in the training. Also, district leaders made a commitment to provide counselors with an additional seven to ten days of time (beyond the nine and one-half month contract), for each of the three years, to plan and develop program strategies, activities, and evaluation processes.

Granite District Board of Education adopted the comprehensive program approach to counseling guidance for all students in April 1992. Within the framework of the guidance program, school counselors structure activities to meet the needs of the students in the areas of guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services; consult with teachers, staff, and parents to enhance their effectiveness in helping students; and they work in harmony with school staff to promote the educational program in the schools.

Granite School District's comprehensive counseling and guidance program has now experienced more than ten years of success. Although it is currently only a secondary school program directed toward all students, grades 7-12, all of the district's 25 secondary schools have met stringent state guidance program standards and qualify for their share of the funding allocated to the district by the Utah State Legislature for the guidance program. The secondary school guidance programs are managed and coordinated through the *Student Services Department* of the district which falls in the larger division of *Program Services*. The *Student Services Department* has responsibility for a wide range of personnel and programs: school counselors, psychologists, and social workers, K-12; the secondary comprehensive counseling and guidance program; community of caring/character education; drug and alcohol prevention and education; alternative education programs, and so on.

### **Granite School District's Guidance Program in Action**

Granite School District guidance program leaders recognize and appreciate the strong foundation for guidance established and held firmly in place through leadership at the Utah State Office of Education. Granite School District secondary school guidance programs continue to be evaluated on their level of implementation of the state program standards through the well-accepted peer review process every three years. The state guidance program standards have remained largely unchanged for ten years, yet schools endeavor to evaluate and enhance their programs annually to respond to their school's changing demographics

and student needs.

Granite School District guidance program leaders have contributed to the success of their 25 secondary schools' guidance programs by focusing on the specific state guidance program standards and doing what they can at the district level to streamline program implementation. As a result, they take on a shared responsibility for the state standards in order to help free up counselors from labor intensive program management issues. These district-level initiatives also support program improvement, evaluation, and enhancement through the state guidance program standards. In actuality, this is a process of taking the state standards and developing common elements for each standard that can be adopted by the individual schools. The following is a brief synopsis of district-wide efforts to streamline each state guidance program standard.

### **Board Adoption and Policy for the Comprehensive Guidance Program**

This standard specifically requires school guidance teams and/or district level guidance administrators to communicate guidance program issues to the local Boards of Education at least every three years. Granite District guidance leaders communicate annually with the Board to update them on the status of program implementation. During the 2000-01 school year, Granite District School Board and district level administrators developed long-range goals and objectives intended to drive the district for the next five years. The district guidance program leaders have reported to the Board as to how the comprehensive counseling and guidance program supports their long-range goals and objectives.

### **Advisory and Steering Committee are Organized and are Functioning Effectively**

School advisory and steering committees are defined as key components of the structural framework of the *Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance* and are stated as such as a program standard. The advisory committee provides support and assists in establishing a direction and identifying goals for a school's guidance program. The steering committee not only designs the methods to implement and achieve the goals, but also provides on-site school management for the guidance program. Granite District counseling and guidance leaders have adhered to the structural framework (and program standard) outlined by the *Utah Model* and have organized a district advisory/steering committee. The district level committee brings leadership, continuity, and consistency to the guidance program from school to school and across the district. Committees are recognized as important aspects of the guidance program, and they have been in place since the early years of program implementation. The district comprehensive guidance *steering committee* has been most productive in attending to displacing non-guidance activities and facilitating district-wide management of the comprehensive guidance program. The current membership structure of the steering committee includes the district Student Services director, district coordinators for counseling and guidance, and the comprehensive guidance chair [counselor] from each secondary school. The steering committee holds regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The chair of the committee is a district secondary comprehensive



counseling and guidance coordinator.

***A School-wide Student/Parent/Teacher Needs Assessment Completed Every Three Years***

Another key guidance program standard is the use of school data including a formal student/parent/teacher needs survey to identify program content goals. Granite School District guidance program leaders contracted with an outside agency, Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity (IBRIC) to develop a common instrument and conduct needs surveys for secondary schools going through their comprehensive guidance program review and evaluation. The goal of the survey is to standardize the way schools identify student needs and the importance of skills and abilities (competencies) students can learn in areas of self-discovery, life skills, and future planning. The NOICC (NCDG) competencies serve as the content for the school's guidance curriculum and are restated as items listed in the needs survey. Seventeen of 25 Granite secondary schools have participated in the district needs survey including students, parents, and teachers. In a recent district-level report, when responses from students, parents, and teachers were combined, they believed that the three most important areas for skills and abilities for students were: 1) Learning how to respect and get along with others; 2) Knowing how to set goals for my future (education and career); and, 3) Learning how to accept myself in a positive way. When responses from students, parents, and faculty were combined, they believed that the three areas in which students need the most help are: 1) Learning how to find and use information that will help them plan for their education and career; 2) Knowing how to set goals for my future (education and career); and, 3) Recognizing skills for a specific occupation. Schools use the results of the needs survey to determine priorities for classroom presentations and other guidance curriculum activities. The data are dis-aggregated by school, and the district has access to aggregate data. The district can use the data as evidence to support guidance program content and continued implementation of the guidance program in secondary schools.

**80% of Aggregate Counselor Time is Devoted to DIRECT Services to Students**

The comprehensive approach to counseling and guidance requires effective time management practices. The district guidance program leaders develop a full year guidance program planning calendar for each school year, and schools use it as a template for developing their school guidance program calendars. This, too, has helped bring greater consistency and continuity to the guidance program from school to school. Not only does it serve as a model for schools to organize and plan their school programs, but it also assists schools in program planning so that their guidance programs are ready to begin on the first day of school with a full year guidance program calendar as the road map. Included in the full year program calendar are district dates and events, district professional learning days for counselors, local and national test dates, dates for state and national conferences, and program prompts to assist counselors in developing their individual school guidance programs. The program prompts have been very effective. For example, a prompt for October suggests that counselors plan and hold advisory committee meetings. Interestingly enough, most schools do exactly that – they hold their advisory committee meetings in October.

## **SEOP (Student Education Occupation Plan) Requirement for ALL Students as a Process and a Product**

Central to Utah's comprehensive guidance program is a requirement for counselors to guide and counsel students in the individual planning component through the development of the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP). State law 53A.1a.106 defines the parameters of the SEOP process, and Granite District has had a policy in place since 1996 that defines and supports the SEOP process at the local level. The state SEOP law and supporting district SEOP policy represent a strong commitment to the individual planning component of the guidance program. The School Board, Granite District PTA, district level administrators, counselors, parents, and students strongly support the SEOP process as evidenced by the state law and the district policy.

SEOP is a process whereby counselors meet annually with individual students (grades 7-12) and their parents to review school success, individual strengths and goals, and to identify any specific student needs that can be addressed by the guidance program. A district-wide SEOP planning document has been developed and is used with students in grades 7-12. The planning document follows the students from grade to grade and school to school. The district guidance steering committee is currently in the process of discussing possible modifications to the district SEOP policy. It has been suggested that the policy reflect stronger commitment for schools to use the SEOP process to better assist "at risk" students and all students specifically at key transition years in the secondary school experience.

## **Assistance for Students in Career Development and Exploration**

This standard places strong emphasis on the goals of the guidance program to assist students in their "next step" planning. Granite School District provides resources to support a career information system in each secondary school – *Career Futures* for the junior high schools and *Choices* for schools serving students in grades 9-12. In addition, the district is unique in its support for career development and exploration by supporting a career center and a certified counselor as career center directors in each of the high schools. The career center counselors work with students in job seeking and finding skills, career days and career fairs, and in post high school placement. The career center counselors also have the services of work-based learning coordinators assigned to each school to coordinate such activities within each high school's feeder system.

## **Program Content**

State guidance program standards specify that school programs have specific content that addresses student needs through student competencies. District guidance leaders in cooperation with key counselors have developed a scope and sequence for guidance program content. The current plan is to have the draft document ready for pilot testing for the 2002-2003 school year. The competencies identified for program content are in the areas of self-discovery, life skills, and future planning. They were developed after careful study of the NOICC (NCDG) competencies, the ASCA standards for comprehensive guidance programs,

the SCANS skills, and locally developed guidance program competencies. Through the scope and sequence project, secondary counselors will have the support and resources to deliver one guidance lesson per grade level (7-12) each term. The counselors will select guidance lessons from the district scope and sequence curriculum that connect to the identified student needs from the school's needs survey.

### **System Support and Program Management**

Non-guidance activities have been eliminated from counselor assignments in secondary schools in Granite School District. To support this standard, a 30 hours per week guidance assistant has been hired in each secondary school, and, in addition, guidance program funds have been allocated to each secondary school for the purpose of hiring a manager for school-wide testing. As a result, counselors are spending more time with students and less time on clerical tasks associated with the day to day activities of a guidance program and school-wide testing.

In addition, district guidance leaders conduct monthly professional learning opportunities for counselors and guidance assistants that address a wide variety of topics ranging from district level services available for students; the Utah Electronic High School and other approved alternatives to earning high school credit; school culture; to career development and truancy intervention. A goal has been set to conduct an annual *Summer Institute* for school guidance teams including administrators that will focus on evaluation and accountability has. As is the case across the country, there is a need to identify data that supports the impact of the district's guidance program on student achievement and determine the value added to the overall mission of the schools by the work that we do through the guidance program.

### **Conclusion**

Program improvement is a process based on evaluation. The planning, designing, and implementing phases of guidance program improvement must be very strong in order for meaningful evaluation and eventual program enhancement to occur. To avoid stagnation and complacency in Granite School District guidance programs and to bring greater consistency and continuity to the overall, broader vision of a district guidance program, the guidance leaders are taking a stronger position with the support and assistance of the steering committee in the process of identifying common elements that can be incorporated into individual school guidance programs. As a new century settles in, it is apparent that the next phase of comprehensive counseling and guidance program development, evaluation, and enhancement in Utah will appear at the local district level, and Granite School District is committed to be at the forefront of this new era. Individual districts can and will emerge as guidance program leaders in the areas of program planning, implementation, evaluation, and enhancement. We are extremely proud of the success of Granite School District's guidance program, but at the same time we recognize that the program is dynamic and will continue to grow and improve.

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# Holland-Based Career Materials: A Resource List for Educators

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## Introduction

Given the rapid changes in the economy and in social institutions, it is not surprising that some career counselors and career theorists believe that the field needs a complete overhaul. These critics argue that the matching models originally developed by Frank Parsons and refined by John Holland and others are no longer relevant in a world characterized by global economies, changing work organizations, and an information revolution. For example, Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996, p. 251) indicated that "Career counselors who see their role as merely matching individuals on the basis of their current characteristics with existing occupations will soon be as obsolete as the occupations themselves."

However, another view suggests that Holland's theory has merit and will continue to have broad and dramatic influence on the field of career counseling. Brown (1996, p. 518) noted that "because of the instruments Holland has produced to measure his constructs, his ideas are without question more influential than the ideas of any of the other theorists in the practice area." Borgen (1991, p. 281), noting that career counseling has increasingly moved towards viewing clients as active rather than passive agents in shaping their careers, says, "It is startling to reread Holland . . . and see how in today's hot emphases he was ahead of the curve on cognition, agency, and empowerment . . . The subsequent success of his SDS was presaged by his beliefs about giving tools to clients to shape their career lives." Borgen further noted that the very name "Self-Directed Search" seems synonymous with the notion of personal agency.

We agree with Brown and Borgen that Holland's RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997) is quite relevant and appropriate for use in contemporary career counseling in educational settings. In this chapter, we first want to focus on identifying and describing the current array of Holland-based career interventions that are available and most commonly used in educational settings. Our experience suggests that busy practitioners may not be familiar with the more than 20 current instruments and resources that were developed by Holland (or his associates) and are directly based on his theory. Second, we want to describe these resources and materials in practical terms that counselors developing educational and career programs might find especially helpful. For example, we have included unit costs and descriptive details in each entry.

The *PAR Catalog of Professional Testing Resources* by Psychological Assessment Resources (PAR; 2002), the current publisher of Holland's materials and resources, provided basic information for this list. Current details and more information about many of these

materials and others are available at <http://www.parinc.com>. For some items, the prices are based on various discounts, e.g., large volume purchases.

The remainder of this chapter provides brief, thumbnail descriptions of Holland-based career materials in five categories: (1) Self-Directed Search Form R (SDS-R): The Original; (2) Self-Directed Search Alternative Forms: CE and E; (3) Measures of Stability: MVS and CASI; (4) Environmental Measures; and (5) Resource Materials. Although there are scores of intervention materials developed by practitioners and researchers that could be included in a list of Holland-based resources, we have focused upon those most directly connected to counseling practice in schools and other educational settings.

### **Self-Directed Search Form R (SDS-R): The Original**

The first category of items on this list begins with the basic, core instrument that is most often used in career interventions and most fully implements Holland's theory, the Self-Directed Search Form R. The list then moves to the various alternative forms and formats of the SDS Form R, including the computer-based versions.

#### *Self-Directed Search® Form R (Regular)*

The original paper-pencil form of the SDS, first published in 1970 and revised and improved in 1977, 1985, and 1994, was developed by John L. Holland. It includes the *Assessment* booklet (AB; Daydreams Section and 228 items) and *Occupations Finder* (OF) and the *Alphabetized OF* (1,335 occupations employing 99% of U.S. workers and updated in 1996). The SDS Form R is based on Holland's RIASEC theory, and is self-administered in 35-45 minutes. It is intended for use by high school, college, and adult populations, and the publisher reports that more than 14 million people have used it. PAR claims that the SDS Form R is the most widely administered interest inventory in the world, being translated into more than 20 languages. SDS Form R sells for about \$2.25 per administration (AB + OF), or about \$4 when used with the *My Vocational Situation* and the *You and Your Career* booklet described below. It may be noted that many of these materials are trademarked or registered, including the hexagon figure, and it is illegal and unethical to copy and use these works without permission of PAR.

#### *You and Your Career*

This 7-page booklet written by Holland and published in 1994 is used with the SDS Form R. It discusses the scientific ideas supporting the inventory, how to use the scores and codes, personality characteristics associated with codes, and suggestions for successful career planning. The cost is about \$1 per booklet. We view it as an essential component of the SDS program.

#### *Self-Directed Search® Form R: Interpretive Report (SDS-R:IR) for Windows™*

This computer-based SDS interpretive report was written by Robert Reardon and first published in 1987 with revisions in 1994 and 1996. The computer software produces a 10-12 page interpretive report based on SDS summary scores and a one page professional summary for the counselor. The program provides for optional entry of 5 occupational

daydreams. The basic interpretive report adapts material from the *Assessment* booklet, *You and Your Career* booklet, and *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes* (DHOC; 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) described later, and provides lists of occupational titles from the *Occupations Finder*. Interpretive Report options include fields of study from the *Educational Opportunities Finder* and leisure options from the *Leisure Activities Finder*. The IR can be customized by adding local information. This Interpretive Report is now available in the Self-Directed Search Software Portfolio (SDS-SP™) for Windows, a new system described below.

#### *SDS Software Module Key Disks*

The SDS Software Module replaces the Self-Directed Search® Form R: Computer Version, which was the original computer-based administration of the SDS Form R. The SDS Software Module provides for client on-line administration of the complete SDS Form R *Assessment* booklet (including the Daydreams Section) and the MVS. It produces a 10-12 page interpretive report for the client and 2-3 page professional summary of 7 diagnostic signs for the counselor. It has a shorter administration time than the paper SDS and can be used as a data collection tool to assess career needs and interests of clients in a setting. It costs about \$2.80 per administration (3.5 disk with 50 uses is \$140).

#### *Self-Directed Search Software Portfolio (SDS-SP™) for Windows*

The SDS-SP (2001) application provides unlimited SDS Form R Interpretive Reports when scores are entered from the SDS paper version (and the My Vocational Situation). It features an on-screen manual and help system, and it provides for SDS on-screen administrations with 25- or 50-use SDS Form R Software Module Key Disks. The Interpretive Report may be edited on-screen and printed in black and white or color. The SDS-SP requires Windows 95/98/ME or Windows NT/2000 or higher and sells for \$450 for unlimited uses of the Interpretive Report.

#### *SDS® Form R: Professional Report Service*

This system uses special Form R scoring service answer sheets that are completed by students and mailed to PAR. Within 24 hours, PAR returns a 10-12 page SDS Interpretive Report and 1-2 page Professional Summary and a Guidelines Booklet. This system can be useful for large group testing, e.g., high school junior class, in a short period of time. This version of SDS Form R does not include SDS Daydreams Section or the MVS. It sells for about \$6.80 per administration.

#### *SDS® Form R: Internet Version*

This most recent version of Form R developed in 1998 and revised in 2001 provides for the on-line administration of the SDS Form R, minus the Daydreams Section and MVS, and produces an Interpretive Report for the user. It was developed in accordance with NCDA's guidelines for Internet-based delivery of career services, includes a section on How To Find A Career Counselor, and has links to Internet sites for career assistance and information. It may be administered on an individual basis (credit card secured by TPN) or a multi-use administration option (user ID and Password) available from PAR. Costs range from \$4.95 (for 1001+ uses) to \$8.95 for an individual report. Preview information is available at <http://www.self-directed-search.com>. A study comparing the three administrative formats of the

SDS Form R (paper, PC, Internet) was reported by Lumsden et al. (2002) and is available at <http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/>.

It may be noted that *Canadian Editions of SDS Form R*, the *Self-Directed Search® (SDS®) Form R: 4th Edition—Spanish (1994) Edition*, and the *Vocational Exploration and Insight Kit (VEIK)* are other applications of the SDS Form R.

### **Self-Directed Search Alternative Forms: CE and E**

The second category of Holland-based materials reviews the two additional alternative forms of the Self-Directed Search typically used in schools, Forms Career Explorer (CE) and E.

#### *SDS® Career Explorer*

This version of the SDS was developed by Holland and Amy Powell and published in 1994. It is designed to help junior high and middle school students with educational and vocational planning. A technical information booklet and teacher's guide are provided. SDS Career Explorer includes a 216-item *Self-Assessment* booklet that produces a 2-letter code, the *Careers* booklet that includes 400 occupations, and the *Exploring Your Future with the SDS* booklet that provides additional interpretive information. It is packaged in sets of 35 and costs about \$3.90 per student administration for the three items.

#### *SDS® Career Explorer: Interpretive Report*

This computer-based Interpretive Report for SDS Career Explorer was written by Reardon and published in 1994. Following operator entry of summary scores, this software program provides students with a 6-8 page individualized report of their educational and career interests in relation to Holland's theory using 2-letter Holland codes in a question and answer format. It includes sample lists of code-related occupations with information about GED and SVP levels, and it includes related fields of study with information about education (ED) levels. An optional list of leisure activities is also available. This program allows for unlimited use and has a batch feature for producing reports for groups. The cover page can be customized with local information. Designed for IBM PCs or compatibles and Macintosh, the cost is \$299 for unlimited use.

#### *SDS® Form E (Easy)*

SDS Form E published in 1996 was the second version of the SDS developed by Holland, and is now in a 4<sup>th</sup> edition. It provides career assessment for persons with limited reading skills (6<sup>th</sup> grade level) and features large print directions written at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. This 198-item version of the SDS produces a two-letter code and has simplified scoring. The *Jobs Finder* (JF) includes 860 titles and the *You and Your Job* (YYJ) booklet provides interpretive information for clients. The cost is about \$3.28 for the three items. It should be noted that all versions of the SDS are fully compatible with all other SDS materials, e.g., Form E results can be used with the Form R *Occupations Finder*. An audiotape is available for an alternative administration format of SDS:E for \$32. A 1996 Canadian (English) version is about \$3.04, and an SDS Form E Spanish Translation, including AB, JF, and YYJ, is



about \$5.48.

Space does not permit a review of *SDS® Form CP (Career Planning)* published in 1990 and designed for adult professionals or adults in transition.

### **Measures of Stability: MVS and CASI**

The third category of this list reviews two instruments, the My Vocational Situation (MVS) and the Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (CASI), developed by Holland that measure the stability of a person's code. This affects the quality of the match between the person and the environment. Persons with Holland codes that are more stable generally require less counselor assistance.

#### *My Vocational Situation (MVS)*

The MVS was developed by Holland, Denise Daiger-Gottfredson, and Paul Power and first published in 1980. The MVS is a two page form useful in counseling and research for identifying career decision making problems in three areas: Vocational Identity (18 items), (need for) Occupational Information (4 items), and Barriers (personal limits or environmental problems) (4 items). The MVS costs about \$.72 per administration, can be completed in less than 10 minutes, and is scored in seconds. Holland, Johnston, and Asama (1993) provide detailed information about the validity and use of the MVS.

#### *Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory™ (CASI)*

The CASI, developed by Holland and Gary Gottfredson, was published in 1994, is self-administered in 35 minutes, and costs about \$3.25 per administration. The CASI assesses career attitudes and obstacles in employed and unemployed adults; surveys job satisfaction, work involvement, skill development, dominant style, career worries, interpersonal abuse, family commitment, risk-taking style, and geographical barriers; and identifies 21 potential career obstacles, i.e., health, finances. Like the MVS, the CASI examines issues outside of the RIASEC typology that may affect a client's career problem solving and decision making.

### **Environmental Measures**

The fourth category includes instruments and materials that classify or measure educational and work environments, including occupations, jobs, and positions. We have not included the *Occupations Finder* here because it was described earlier.

#### *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes™ (Third Edition; DHOC)*

The DHOC, developed by Gottfredson and Holland, was published in 1982, 1989, and 1996. It is 750 pages and costs \$54. The DHOC provides empirically derived alphabetical and code-classified indices for all occupations in the DOT and Supplements, and includes cross references for RIASEC codes and OES, SOC, Census, CIP, GOE, and OOH occupational classifications. It is the definitive reference for Holland codes and environments.

### *Educational Opportunities Finder™ (EOF)*

The EOF, written by Donald Rosen, Kay Holmberg, and Holland, was first published in 1987 as the *College Majors Finder*. The most recent version was published in 1994 and costs about \$1.80 per booklet (may be reused). The EOF lists over 750 technical and college level fields of study alphabetically, by three-letter Holland code, and by degree level (2 year; 4 year; postgraduate). It helps individuals relate Holland codes to varied educational options.

### *Leisure Activities Finder™ (LAF)*

The LAF, developed by Holmberg, Rosen, and Holland, was published in 1990 and costs about \$2 per booklet (may be reused). It lists more than 750 leisure activities alphabetically and by two-letter Holland codes, and is useful in career, educational, and retirement planning.

### *Position Classification Inventory™ (PCI)*

The PCI, authored by Gottfredson and Holland, was published in 1991. It is a job analysis inventory for more accurately classifying positions according to RIASEC codes. Its 84 items can be completed in less than 10 minutes and self-scored in 2 minutes at a cost of about \$2.32 per administration. The PCI can be used to compare employee and supervisor views of a job position and to identify areas of person-job fit. It could be used in conjunction with the SDS to assess the quality of person/job fit in internships and part-time positions. A PCI Professional Report Service is also available at about \$3 per administration.

## **Resource Materials**

The fifth and concluding category includes the manuals, books, and general resources that support practitioners using Holland's theory and materials in career counseling. Practitioners using the SDS should have read and studied the Professional User's Guide.

### *Making Vocational Choices (3rd edition)*

This basic reference on RIASEC Theory by John Holland was first published in 1973, with later editions in 1985 and 1997. It is the fourth book by Holland (1997) on the RIASEC theory in 25 years and reviews more than 500 studies on the theory, classification, SDS, and VPI. It includes 303 pages of practical suggestions for using the theory in research and counseling practice, features a 42-page reference list, and sells for \$35. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Holland's work.

### *The SDS® Professional User's Guide (PUG) and The SDS® Technical Manual*

The PUG is one of two SDS manuals by Holland, Amy Powell, and Barbara Fritzsche and both were published in 1994. The PUG includes 101 pages of information about the origins of the RIASEC theory and the SDS, about 30 case studies, and a 143-item reference list. It provides suggestions on interpretation and use of the SDS, norms for SDS scales and codes, scoring procedures for the Future Possibilities item, the Iachan Index, and a counselor self-test.

The 92 page Technical Manual reviews the psychometric history of the four editions of the SDS Form R and other forms of the SDS; provides technical information about SDS concurrent and predictive validity and the reliability of SDS scales; and summarizes development of the *Occupations Finder* and the results of SDS outcome studies. It has 189 references and 87 tables.

*The Self-Directed Search and Related Holland Career Materials: A Practitioner's Guide*

This book, written by Robert Reardon and Janet Lenz (1998), includes 12 chapters in 317 pages that provide a complete review of the history, design, and use of the SDS and supporting materials and resources. It also links Cognitive Information Processing theory and RIASEC theory through 6 case studies and program development suggestions. It includes 28 figures, 19 tables, 12 appendices, and subject/author indices. Excerpts from published reviews of the book are available at [www.parinc.com](http://www.parinc.com). The cost is \$35.

### Summary

In this chapter we have provided brief sketches of 20 products and materials that are based upon or operationalize Holland's theory of vocational behavior. This array of resources is unique because it is based on the life's work of one person, John Holland. These career interventions are also based upon research and documentation that is without peer in the career services field, and they merit careful review by counselors even in this time of rapid social economic change.

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# Using Holland's Theory To Analyze Labor Market Data

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## Introduction

Some career theorists and other professionals have warned about dramatic shifts in the economy and the implications for changes needed in career services and theory (e.g., Bridges, 1994). Writers have discussed changeability in the workforce and the increasing obsolescence of using occupations to describe work. Such views appear to question workforce stability with respect to interests and work activities and to challenge the effectiveness of an approach to career guidance that seeks to match personal characteristics and occupations.

Another area of concern to career services professionals involves gender and kinds of work, especially the impact of occupational stereotypes (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Many occupations remain segregated by gender, e.g., social work, nursing, and elementary school teaching, and differences in income continue to exist for men and women in the same kinds of work (Reardon, Vernick, & Reed, 2001).

Given the complexity of the changing economy and the continuing influence of occupational stereotypes, what theory and materials might be useful to career services professionals? How might counselors work with clients in a way to help them understand the labor market and their role in it? The author proposes that Holland's (1997) person-environment model (1997) is a valuable frame of reference for career counselors and instructors to use with clients and students in interpreting labor market data.

In this chapter, Holland's model will be used to present labor market census data from 1960 to 1990 followed by implications for career counseling and teaching. A more detailed report with tabular data and implications for public policy is available in Reardon, Vernick, and Reed (2001).

## The Research Project

This research builds upon prior work conducted by G. D. Gottfredson, Holland, and L.S. Gottfredson (1975) and others. These researchers analyzed U. S. employment using data provided by the decennial census between 1960 and 1980. The studies investigated variables using Holland's theory as a system for classification, including gender, ethnicity, salaries, educational and training levels associated with occupations, and complexity ratings for occupations. The current researchers classified occupations by Holland's classification schema and examined gender and income in terms of 1990 census data.

Holland's typological theory (Holland, 1997) specifies a theoretical connection between vocational personalities and work environments that makes it possible to use the same RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional)

classification system for both persons and jobs. Many inventories and career assessment tools use the typology to enable individuals to categorize their interests and personal characteristics in terms of the six types and combinations of the types.

Realistic (R) types are found in occupations such as auto mechanic, aircraft controller, surveyor, electrician, and farmer. The R type usually has mechanical and athletic abilities, and likes to work outdoors and with tools and machines, and might be described as conforming, frank, hardheaded, honest, humble, materialistic, natural, normal, persistent, practical, shy, and thrifty.

Investigative (I) types like occupations such as biologist, chemist, physicist, geologist, anthropologist, laboratory assistant, and medical technician. The I type usually has math and science abilities, and likes to work alone and to solve problems. They might be described as analytical, complex, critical, curious, independent, intellectual, introverted, pessimistic, precise, and rational.

Artistic (A) types are found in occupations such as composer, musician, stage director, dancer, interior decorator, actor, and writer. The A type usually has artistic skills, enjoys creating original work, and has a good imagination. They may be described as complicated, disorderly, emotional, idealistic, imaginative, impulsive, independent, introspective, nonconforming, and original.

Social (S) types like occupations such as teacher, speech therapist, religious worker, counselor, clinical psychologist, and nurse. The S type generally likes to help, teach, and counsel people, and may be described as cooperative, friendly, generous, helpful, idealistic, kind, responsible, sympathetic, tactful, understanding, and warm.

Enterprising (E) types like occupations such as buyer, sports promoter, television producer, business executive, salesperson, travel agent, supervisor, and manager. The E type usually has leadership and public speaking abilities, is interested in money and politics, and likes to influence people. The E type may be described as acquisitive, agreeable, ambitious, attention-getting, domineering, energetic, extroverted, impulsive, optimistic, self-confident, and sociable.

Finally, Conventional (C) types are found in occupations such as bookkeeper, financial analyst, banker, tax expert, and secretary. The C type has clerical and math abilities, likes to work indoors and to organize things. The C type might be described as conforming, careful, efficient, obedient, orderly, persistent, practical, thrifty, and unimaginative.

Occupations were coded according to the RIASEC typology (Gottfredson & Holland, 1996) and then numerous variables were examined. It is important to note that data in this study regarding employment were based on a sampling procedure and when classifying these occupations, the current researchers used the Holland codes assigned to occupations by different researchers at the time the original research was completed. The areas of inquiry were:

1. What were the numbers and percentages of census occupational titles listed in 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990 in relation to six different kinds of work (Holland RIASEC categories)?
2. What were the numbers and percentages of occupational employment from 1960-1990 in relation to six different kinds of work?
3. What were the employment percentages of men and women in 1990 in relation to six kinds of work by gender?

4. What were the incomes for different kinds of work for men, women, and the total population in 1990?

### **Occupational Titles**

In analyzing the numbers and percentages of census occupational titles listed in 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990 in relation to Holland RIASEC categories we noted that the distribution was skewed in each decade. The Realistic area included many more named occupations in the census than the other areas, at around half of all occupations included over the 40-year period. Only 10 occupations (2%) were identified in the Artistic area. Over the 4 decades, the number of occupations in the Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, and Conventional areas remained relatively stable, while the Social area decreased slightly and the Enterprising area increased.

### **Employment**

We also examined the numbers and percentages of occupational employment from 1960-1990 by six kinds of work. The total estimated employment increased from 64.1 million in 1960 to 115.7 million in 1990. The Realistic area had the most occupational titles and the largest number of individuals employed and Artistic had the fewest occupational titles and number employed. The profile of kinds of work for occupational titles from highest to lowest in 1990 was REISCA while the profile of kinds of employment was RECSIA.

Realistic employment declined 18% relative to the other five kinds of work from 1960-1990, but increased in real numbers. Employment in the Enterprising area increased by 8% between 1970 and 1980, and the percentage of individuals employed in the Investigative area doubled between 1960 and 1990. Employment in the other four areas remained more stable.

### **Men and Women**

There were noticeable differences in employment between men and women across the six areas from 1960-1990. For men, most employment was in the Realistic area, followed by the Enterprising area. During the four decades, between 79% and 85% of male workers were in these two areas.

The Conventional area of work remained the most common for women across the decades. Compared to men, women were employed in more varied kinds of work. The percentage of women in the Enterprising area almost doubled over the four decades, from 13% to 24%. Investigative and Artistic work consistently showed the smallest percentage of employment for women.

There was an increase of male employment in the Investigative area from 4% to 8% and a corresponding increase for women from 1% to 4% in the Investigative area.

## **Gender and Income**

Income levels were examined for different kinds of work for men, women, and the total population in 1990. The average income profile for six kinds of work ranging from lowest to highest was CRASEI. The average Investigative income was more than two times larger than the average Conventional income. With respect to income, the Conventional and Realistic areas were lowest. The income for women was lower than for men in all six categories, and the discrepancy was greater at higher income levels. In general, Investigative and Enterprising areas of work were characterized by the highest incomes.

## **Implications**

An important task of the career service professional is to help clients make optimal use of information about themselves and their options. These findings and the use of Holland's framework to organize labor market data are of special interest to career counselors and career course instructors because it may help clients to develop more complex schemas about the world of work. Helping a client to develop these schemas can be beneficial because clients' skills in drawing relationships between their self-knowledge and occupational knowledge are largely related to the complexity and organization of knowledge schemata (Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, in press).

Using Holland's theory as a way to describe different types of work makes it possible for the student to understand the relationship between kinds of work, gender, income, and prestige. It can also provide a forum for the discussion of issues such as occupational stereotypes and the availability of different types of work.

Viewing employment data through the lens of Holland's typology provides the student to with a practical organizational system from which to understand the complex world of work. Using this framework can allow the student to consider his or her values, such as prestige, income, and a willingness to delay entry into a chosen field because of the link between educational level and these values.

Students often affirm that they value job security. While the reality of work makes it difficult to help a student choose an occupation that is secure, students may appreciate that Holland typology can also be used in employment projections. Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, and Peterson (2000) analyzed labor market projections from 1996-2006. They discovered that occupations in the S, E, and I areas tended to have higher projected employment and growth than the other Holland areas.

Viewing occupational data and trends through Holland's six types of work may also help students to examine myths and realities related to occupational stereotypes. A frequently heard theme from students is "I want to help people but if I choose a Social type of occupation, I will earn very little." Many students seem to be under the impression that the income for Social types of occupations is relatively low. It may be useful for students to learn that Social kinds of occupations as a group are in the mid-range regarding income level when compared to the other types.

It also may be valuable for students to note that Investigative occupations top the list



for income level. In high school, students may hesitate at planning a career in the sciences or other Investigative areas for different reasons, including negative stereotypes (e.g., fear of being seen as a “nerd”). Seeing the relatively high income may encourage students to consider and respect this area of work.

Another myth that students may buy into is the idea that the information revolution has rid our society of Realistic jobs. While 2002 census data will add valuable current information regarding the occupational employment in the Realistic area, students may note that this type of work remained the largest area of employment through 1990 and actually increased in real numbers. Reports of the changing economy may also intimidate students. Students may hesitate at making educational and occupational choices or undervalue their education due to a concern that the labor market is shifting. It may be helpful for students to see how in Holland terms there seems to be some degree of stability.

Occupational stereotyping by gender seems to be a recurring concern for counselors and teachers. Sharing this kind of labor market data with students might promote valuable, interesting discussions in a career development class, e.g., why is it that men seem to have been slower to move into nontraditional areas of work than women, why have women moved more into Enterprising areas recently, or why do women dominate employment in the Conventional area, which tends to be of lower income? Sharing numbers with students and engaging in discussions of broad areas of work may promote a greater understanding of these issues.

Another topic of interest to counselors and teachers is work-family life balance. Considering employment through Holland typology can also be a springboard for this discussion, e.g., how do types relate to characteristics that might be desirable for someone trying to gain work flexibility? While students may associate Conventional and Realistic areas with numerous part-time opportunities, Investigative and Enterprising activities may ultimately offer some autonomy while providing a higher income.

Using Holland’s framework with labor data also helps students to think outside the box of named occupations. Students might consider what skill sets are worth developing and how to incorporate different elements into their occupation or work environment. The census data suggest that even a second or third letter in an occupational code may alter the impact of the first letter with respect to income. Thus, counselors might help clients understand that adding Investigative or Enterprising elements to their occupational pursuits may increase their future level of income.

Approximately 2% of occupations were in the Artistic area. Those with Artistic aspirations sometimes struggle with the question of whether to pursue their passions because of their fear of not finding a job. For those students who are not willing to risk pursuing an occupation which is primarily Artistic, understanding the Holland typology and the idea of incorporating Artistic elements at a secondary level may be appealing.

Some students or clients may feel overwhelmed by detailed occupational labor market data. Using the Holland typology in conjunction with labor market data may assist the student to understand occupational data in a way that has the ease of categories, but which still retains some complexity, especially when considering the second and third letters of codes.

Some students have Holland codes which are uncommon or have low consistency. At times, these students may not fully understand how uncommon codes or low consistency relates to their aspirations. By showing students that the economy has typically not provided opportunities in certain codes (e.g., no occupations in the 1990 census were coded with the first two letters of RA, IC, AC, and CA), students may have a better grasp of this concept. Showing students this information may also help them to focus on the external reality of the labor market, rather than feeling concerned that their Holland code is unusual.

Instructors of graduate career courses in counseling programs may also find this extension of Holland's theory significant. It can help the graduate counseling student to understand the complexity of Holland's theory and its potential use with future clientele. In addition, graduate students may appreciate how certain elements of Holland's theory are supported by this data, e.g., that low consistency scorers on the SDS (where the first two letters are opposite on the hexagon, e.g., Investigative/Enterprising) may have more difficulty in locating occupational alternatives which match that particular code.

### Summary

In summary, the researchers found considerable stability in the world of work across the decades; the percentages of employment across the six kinds of work were fairly stable, the Realistic area continued to dominate employment and occupational categories, and the Artistic area remained very small. There were marked employment differences between men and women across the six areas from 1960-1990. In examining income and gender by kinds of work, we found the average income profile for six kinds of work ranging from lowest to highest was CRASEI.

Career counselors and instructors could use these labor market data to show the relationships between kinds of work, cognitive skill development, gender, and financial income and to help students develop more complex, yet practical schemas regarding the world of work. The information could also be used to highlight important issues such as occupational stereotypes, gender, work-family life balance, availability of types of work, and applications of Holland's theory.

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# Developing a Career Resource for College Students in Saudi Arabia

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## Introduction

With the development of Career Oasis, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals has pioneered the use of computer-based career guidance in Saudi Arabia. KFUPM contracted with Verbal Media, LLC, an American consulting company, to create a resource that would be available in both Arabic and English, in both online and paper-and-pencil versions, and that would be adapted to the economy, educational system, and culture of Saudi Arabia. Together Verbal Media and KFUPM created the assessments, the software, the career information, and the guidance support needed to establish and maintain a useful career development resource.

## The Need

Saudi Arabia today has a pressing need for resources to help with career development. A huge baby-boom generation is poised to enter the job market just as the economy has cooled down from the days of high oil prices (MacFarquhar, 2001). The government has mandated that an increasing proportion of the jobs currently held by foreigners be filled by citizens, but the opening up of these jobs does not guarantee job satisfaction. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia is moving toward membership in the World Trade Organization and is educating a workforce of world-class engineers, scientists, and business leaders at universities such as the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM). Will the graduates of these universities find satisfying jobs? How will they meet the opportunities and adjust to the career dislocations that come with membership in the global, high-tech economy?

To shed light on the unfolding career development situation in Saudi Arabia, Americans may find it useful to remember their own national experiences in a roughly similar era: the late 1960s and early 1970s. That also was a time when a baby boom was entering the workforce, when the economy was unstable, and when the country was just beginning to feel the effects of membership in a global economy. (Remember what happened to the automobile, steel, and energy industries at that time?) One way in which the United States responded at that time to its own need for help with career development was to invent computer-based career guidance. Therefore it is entirely appropriate that Saudi Arabia is now turning to this same powerful resource to help with its career development needs.

### *The Impetus*

KFUPM, in Dhahran, is an all-male university that specializes in engineering and science — it might be compared to MIT. All classes are taught in English, and before students may enter the four-year curriculum they first must complete an “Orientation Year” in which they improve their English and learn certain academic skills that are typical of American-style college-level classes (such as writing original research papers).

In 1997 Dr. Naim Atiyeh, Director of the Testing and Evaluation Center at KFUPM, began to investigate how computer-based career guidance might be obtained for his university and eventually for the Kingdom as a whole. He did so with the encouragement of Dr. Abdul-Aziz A. Al-Dukhayil, the Rector of KFUPM, who is a psychologist and had previously supported Dr. Atiyeh in his development of college entrance examinations for use in Saudi Arabia (Atiyeh, 2002).

Dr. Atiyeh approached Dr. Laurence Shatkin, who has been working in the field of computer-based career guidance since 1979 and was one of the developers of the SIGI PLUS system at Educational Testing Service (Norris, Shatkin, & Katz, 1991). In a visit to KFUPM Dr. Shatkin presented the principles and benefits of computer-based career guidance and discussed the requirements for a system that would meet the needs of KFUPM students, taking into account the Saudi economy, educational system, and culture, plus the need to have the interface and content in the Arabic language. Ultimately Dr. Atiyeh decided that the expense of adapting an existing American system would be too high to be feasible, and that a more appropriate and doable strategy would be to create an entirely new tool based on information that is in the public domain, subject to verification through local field research. The projected career guidance tool would be developed in the two targeted languages at once, English and Arabic. KFUPM investigated consulting services in the U.S. and contracted with Dr. Shatkin, from Verbal Media, LLC, a well-known American author in the field of computer-based career guidance. Thus Career Oasis was born.

### *The Requirements*

Dr. Atiyeh formed a Career Guidance Committee at KFUPM to oversee development and use of Career Oasis as a career guidance tool. The following requirements were set for the new resource:

- It must be based on a valid model of career decision making.
- It must cover a wide range of occupations of interest to KFUPM students, including occupations not linked to the degree programs at KFUPM, but excluding occupations for which minimal training is required.
- It must include an assessment, a search in the database, and information about occupations and degree programs available in Saudi Arabia.
- It must be available in both English and Arabic.
- It must be available in both an online version and a paper-and-pencil version.
- It must be appropriate for the culture of Saudi Arabia.
- It must be easy to use.

On the basis of these requirements, a detailed proposal was prepared by Verbal Media for a Career Oasis resource.<sup>1</sup> Five faculty members at KFUPM reviewed the proposal and

contributed suggestions for revision and expansion that subsequently were incorporated into the proposal.

### ***The Model***

The proposed resource, Career Oasis, is based on a guidance model that maximizes individual freedom of choice and emphasizes satisfaction of individual values and personal preferences. It recognizes that self-understanding is an important component of career decision making, and that the counterpart to self-understanding is knowledge of career options (occupational and educational). With both of these kinds of knowledge, the choice can be informed and rational. This model is based on the work of Martin R. Katz (Katz, 1966).

The implication of this approach is that Career Oasis includes self-assessments of values, interests, and preferences — linked to a large database of information about occupations and how to prepare for them. The linkage between the two elements is made clear, so that students gain a clearer understanding of how they relate to the world of work and to higher education.

Career Oasis uses self-assessments, rather than tests or other kinds of assessments, because self-assessments are very efficient, students take them seriously, they work especially well on the computer, and they encourage students to be committed (Katz, 1993).

### ***The Database***

Career Oasis uses a database derived from the O\*NET 1.0 database developed by the U.S. Department of Labor (Peterson et al., 1995). Occupations were eliminated if they had minimal educational or training requirements, or if they were inappropriate for the Saudi culture (e.g., Gaming Cage Workers). Other occupations were added because they were typical of the Saudi economy. The accumulated set of 690 occupations was then handed to a committee designated by the Testing and Evaluation Center at KFUPM for matching with the Saudi occupational taxonomy. This committee included a labor economist and two educationists. The committee also identified which occupations are open to men, which to women, and which to both sexes, and rated the occupations on their level of income (high, medium, or low) and on their level of job opportunity (high, medium, or low).

The occupational descriptors used in the O\*NET database were then simplified, in an attempt to reduce the number of skills to be used for rating. It was found that many of the skills and other rated features in the O\*NET database were highly intercorrelated — in other words, redundant — so it was possible to collapse several and thus reduce the total number of features that needed to be assessed. For example, the six skills that the O\*NET conceptual model called *Content Skills* were reduced to four: Read/Write, Listen/Speak, Mathematics, and Science. Another consideration for selecting skills was to try to use concepts that would be readily understood by students. In some cases skill names used by O\*NET were modified or completely changed to be more easily comprehended. The result of this process was that the number of skills was reduced from 46 to 16.

The O\*NET database contained another dimension called *Abilities* that included variables that would be difficult for students to distinguish from similarly named skills, even though the dimensions were conceptually different. For example, the ability “Mathematical Reasoning” and the skill “Mathematics” might appear redundant. Therefore,

the abilities chosen for use in Career Oasis (and called "Special Abilities") were those that had no equivalents in the skills domain and were thought to be readily understandable to students as abilities.

For values, a similar procedure was used to separate the 21 O\*NET values into the six categories used in the O\*NET content model, and then to examine the intercorrelations within categories. For example, in the category called *Achievement* the high correlation (.91) between Ability Utilization and Achievement led to the merger of these two values into one called Achievement. By this method the number of values was reduced from 21 to 15. (Subsequently, as discussed below, three values were added.)

When occupational features (such as specific skills or values) were combined, the ratings assigned to occupations for those features were averaged. For example, when the O\*NET values Ability Utilization and Achievement were combined into one value called Achievement, the mean rating for these two values was used as the single rating for the Career Oasis value.

The interest fields used in the O\*NET database are based on the six rubrics used by Holland in the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1976). It is important to note that for Holland, these six rubrics cover the *entire structure* of personality as it relates to occupations. Since Career Oasis was to use interest fields as only one domain of several, it was decided that they should be based on a more narrowly focused domain, the dimension called "Knowledges" in the O\*NET content model.

The O\*NET content model included a dimension called *Physical Work Conditions* that contained four rated categories: Work Setting, Environmental Conditions, Job Hazards, and Body Positioning. Because many of the specific conditions included here were too highly specific, or not very relevant to the Career Oasis selection of occupations, many of these features were combined and others eliminated. As a result, it was possible to reduce the total number to 14.

For the educational database, the Classification of Instructional Programs of the U.S. Department of Education provided the names and descriptions of college majors. The CIP taxonomy was already crosswalked to the O\*NET database of occupations, so that it was known which college majors were considered best preparation for which occupations. Based on this crosswalk, an educational database was assembled, consisting of all those college majors that were linked to the occupations included in Career Oasis. No other college majors were included.

The Ministry of Higher Education provided a listing that showed which majors were offered at each of the Saudi colleges and universities in the higher education system. These majors were matched to equivalent CIP majors, and their titles were translated into Arabic.

### **Major Components of the Product**

Career Oasis is available in two formats: as a workbook with a machine-scannable answer sheet, and as a fully online program. Both formats are available in both English and Arabic. Both formats offer a *self-assessment* of the student's work-related values, interest fields, skills, and special abilities, a *computerized search for occupations* that meet the

student's preferences, and retrieval of *facts about occupations and college majors*. Both formats allow the search results and facts to be printed out, and both provide a folder to help students interpret their printouts, plus a letter to the student's parents.

### ***The Scan-Sheet Version***

In the scan-sheet versions, students complete exercises in a workbook, some of which involve writing in the workbook (warm-up exercises), others of which involve writing responses on the scan-sheet (assessments). The scan-sheet is then read by an NCS-10 scanner, and the resulting data file is processed by the Career Oasis Utility program, producing a printout that is returned to the student in the folder.

### ***The Online Version***

In the online version, students complete a series of assessment exercises that produce results that are stored for search. The interactivity allows for feedback that is not possible in the scan-sheet version — for example, students are warned if they choose a low-rated value as one of their top values. The assessments cover the same domains as in the scan-sheet version and produce the same results, which are stored in memory rather than on a paper sheet.

### ***The Search***

The routines for self-assessment and search in Career Oasis are designed to produce the same results for the scan-sheet and online versions (Shatkin and Norris, 2001). In both versions, the students select an intended level of educational achievement, give weights to all the values, rate their abilities on all the skills and special abilities, and select a limited number of interest fields. In both versions students also identify their "Top Three" values and skills in order to bring greater focus to their choices, and narrow down the features that they will use in the search. In both versions, the search selects occupations by eliminating those that provide a below-average amount of satisfaction for a specified value or interest field, or for which the importance of a specified skill or special ability is below average. For example, specifying the value Responsibility eliminates the occupation Law Clerks, because in that occupation there are not a lot of opportunities to obtain this satisfaction. Specifying the skill Persuading and Negotiating eliminates the occupation Amusement and Recreation Establishment Managers, because that skill is not of high importance in that occupation. In the scan-sheet version, students rank-order the "Top Seven Features" that they want to use in the search, and these features are applied one at a time, stopping short of using a feature that will reduce the list to fewer than three occupations. In the online search, by contrast, students have the ability to add or subtract features at will and can immediately see the effects these actions have on the resulting list of occupations.

In the online version, students can double-click on any occupation on their list to see the facts about it. In the scan-sheet version, the facts are automatically printed for the occupation at the top of the list. (Occupations on the list are ordered by their ability to satisfy what the student asked for.)



### ***The Printout***

Essentially the same printout is produced for the scan-sheet version and the online version, and it includes the following: a summary of what the student said about himself (KFUPM is an all-male university) in the self-assessment; the results of a search (in the online version, perhaps several searches); the core facts about an occupation of interest or one that was retrieved by the search (in the online version, perhaps several occupations); and the core facts about a college major of interest (in the online version, perhaps several majors).

### ***The Parent Letter***

The printout is accompanied by a parent letter designed to foster discussion between the student and his parents. The developers of Career Oasis are acutely aware that adolescents have two needs that work at cross-purposes: the need for parental input in important decisions versus the growing need for the son to learn how to make decisions independently. Considerable care was taken to ensure that the letter balances the two needs.

### ***Facts About Occupations***

In both versions, the occupational reports include the following information: title; Saudi occupation code number; open to males, females, or both males and females; definition; amount of required education; important tasks; special work conditions (e.g., sitting, standing, indoors, outdoors); income level (expressed as high, medium, or low); important satisfactions (i.e., of work-related values); important interest fields; skills and special abilities that are important for the occupation; recommended college majors, together with a definition and the Saudi colleges or universities offering the major. In the online version, about one-third of the occupational reports are accompanied by a photograph of a worker or work site, in almost every case obtained from a Saudi university or agency.

### ***Facts About College Majors***

In both versions, reports are generated about college majors showing the definition, the Saudi colleges or universities offering the major, and the occupations to which the major is linked.

### ***The Folder***

The Career Oasis folder does more than keep the printouts and parent letter together. It also includes an insert that explains how to interpret the Career Oasis printout, an exercise (printed on the inside) for deciding between occupations of interest, and information (printed on the back cover) about how to conduct additional career exploration.

### ***Research on Work-Related Values***

It was understood from the beginning of the development process that one of the major tasks would be deciding on a set of work-related values that would be appropriate to use with Saudi students and for which information was also available or obtainable.

The 14 values that were selected on the basis of data analysis were reviewed by the Career Guidance Committee at KFUPM to ascertain whether this set of values from O\*NET

was adequate for Saudi students. The committee first added a value, Conventionality, that is not included in O\*NET and is defined as “Not being in situations that break with norms, customs, or traditions.”

Next a questionnaire based on this list was developed both in English and Arabic. It was administered to a sample of 94 students drawn from KFUPM High School, the Orientation Year, and upper-classmen. All of the current values, with the exception of Working by Yourself, were considered important.

At a later stage, based on additional comments from the KFUPM committee and suggestions from students, three more values were added: Job Opportunity, Recognition, and Responsibility. The last two of these are included in the O\*NET content model, and therefore information was available. (Eventually the occupations in the database were rated on Job Opportunity by the KFUPM database committee.)

As a final test of all 19 values, a Web-based version of the questionnaire that included all 19 values was developed by a KFUPM programmer at the Testing and Evaluation Center and put on the KFUPM Web site. This questionnaire drew 24 responses from high school students, 92 from orientation-year students, and 23 from college students. The results confirmed that all of the values, including the newly added three, were important to students — and that Working by Yourself was the least important.

### ***Development of Assessments***

The assessments were designed to cover the same variables that are used to describe the occupations in the database — e.g., the same 19 values. An assessment typically consists of a *definition* of the variable and a *rating scale* by which the student indicates the importance of the variable to him (value) or his level of ability (skill or special ability). For interest fields, there was a definition, but the rating scale was simply yes or no. Definitions were closely based on wording derived from O\*NET, but in cases where two or more variables had been combined to form a single variable, wording of the definitions was combined in a way that conveyed the overall concept. Skills were defined with several illustrative examples to help students make self-estimates more realistically.

### ***The Field Test***

In November 2000, Dr. Shatkin visited KFUPM to conduct a field test of the English and Arabic scan-sheet version and of the English interactive version in collaboration with the Testing and Evaluation Center at KFUPM. (The Arabic interactive version was not yet complete.) Two samples of students were designated, one using the scan-sheet version, and the other online version. After each session students were given an evaluation questionnaire to fill out. Of the scan-sheet users, 18 returned it. When asked how interesting and how useful Career Oasis was, they rated Career Oasis “good,” and 94% of them said they would recommend it to a friend. Users of the online version completed a slightly different evaluation questionnaire, with 25 responding. Their opinions about the interest and usefulness of Career Oasis were identical to those of the first group, and 88% said they would recommend Career Oasis to a friend. In both groups, students thought the amount of time Career Oasis required and its reading level were “just right.” Observations of students during use of Career Oasis and interviews afterward revealed several ways that the workbook and online program could be made easier to use.

### ***Arabization of Career Oasis***

The Testing and Evaluation Center at KFUPM took charge of the adaptation to Arabic. A committee was formed to prepare the first draft of the translation, which covered all paper-and-pencil materials, as well as the online screens. Two psychologists were then selected for final review and revision (Drs. Atiyeh and Ibrahim of KFUPM). Creating the Arabic version of the online program also required reprogramming, which was undertaken in collaboration with the technical support staff of the College of Computer Science and Engineering at KFUPM (Mr. Al-Muhtaseb).

### ***The Initial Releases***

Release 0.9 of Career Oasis, with both scan-sheet and online versions in English, was produced in April of 2001. It included an administrative program that enables the guidance counselor to retrieve a count of how many students have used Career Oasis between any two dates. Two other releases were tried out to address certain special requirements of Arabic script, before an improved user-friendly release (1.2), free from bugs, with full consistency between the outputs of the Arabic and English versions, was put in place in April 2002. It functions on PCs running an Arabic-enabled version of Windows (2000 or more recent).

### ***Training Counselors for Support***

Guided by the understanding that the process of career guidance would be more effective when accompanied by human counseling (Rozman and Kahl, 1984), the Testing and Evaluation Center of KFUPM organized a series of meetings and workshops to provide training at KFUPM in the use of the Career Oasis program for group and individual counseling. Dr. Shatkin was invited to lead this effort for two weeks, from April 4 to April 17, 2002. He gave a series of workshops in collaboration with the Testing and Evaluation Center and the Information Technology Center, addressed to faculty advisers and staff from the various colleges of the university and from KFUPM High School. The workshops were designed to familiarize the trainees with what Career Oasis can and cannot do, to explain how Career Oasis fits into a larger career development intervention with preparatory and follow-up steps, and to provide practice with interpreting the printouts based on sound counseling principles.

### ***Conclusion: What's Next***

The Career Guidance Committee at the Testing and Evaluation Center has recommended to the Rector several major goals for Career Oasis: to conduct ongoing studies of its validity; to make the program self-supporting; to expand usage; and to create an infrastructure for researching and updating the occupational and educational information. The present plan is for Career Oasis to be used initially by Orientation-Year students, and for usage to be extended later to upper-division students and to high school students. Much remains to be learned about how students of different ages may use Career Oasis differently, how Career Oasis may affect students' choice of academic major or career plans, and how parents may react to increased career development activity at the university.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> In writing the proposal, and in the subsequent research and development work, Dr. Shatkin collaborated with Lila Norris, who had worked with him at ETS in the development of SIGI PLUS and has been an innovator in the field of computer-based career guidance since its earliest days in the 1960s.

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## Map Your Future Through ASA's New and Transfer Student Web Site

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### Introduction

Students completing the baccalaureate degree generally have greater career advancement and earnings potential than high school, certificate or associate degree graduates (Amirault, 1994). Today's high school and college students seek web-based information on career paths that lead to rewarding careers with the option to continue toward baccalaureate degree programs either directly or through local community college transfer (Harris-Bowlsbey, 1997). The College of Applied Sciences and Arts (ASA) at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) provides 14 technically orientated baccalaureate programs for high school graduates or college transfer students. Students who may be interested in careers requiring a baccalaureate degree may visit ASA's Transfer and New Students Info website <<http://www.siu.edu/~perkins/asacareer/ASACar.htm>> to access information about career paths available at SIUC that relate to their interest areas.

Our most successful students often come to ASA with a fairly clear picture of where they are going and what they expect to accomplish during their college education. They are ready and willing to work hard to become more than adequately prepared for their chosen career. Their enthusiasm shows through in everything they do while here; and they are nearly always the first ones to receive offers for exciting and rewarding careers. We want all of our students to be that successful. To that end, we have developed our website to be used at multiple levels of career exploration to help potential students find those career fields that will feed their enthusiasm and enable them to find the strength and motivation to overcome obstacles to achieving career success.

Many people, when contemplating career choices, struggle with questions, confusion, and indecision (Cutshall, 2001). "What type of career is appropriate for me?" "How can I adequately prepare for that career?" "Is that career really as wonderful as it sounds?" "What can I do at the middle-school, high school, and community college levels to prepare to excel in a baccalaureate program that enables me to achieve my career goals?" "If I complete a program at university, will it actually prepare me to enter into my chosen field?" "Would it honestly be worth the time and money required to acquire a bachelor's degree, or would I be better off entering the workforce directly from high school or community college?"

All of those questions and more need to be answered on an individual basis. Although resources for researching and refining those answers are available on the Internet, much of the information is fragmented and difficult to locate; and it is often provided at a generic level that students cannot apply to a personal career action plan (Kirk, 2000). The ASA Transfer and New Students Info website seeks to provide students with easy access to information that is helpful in assisting them to make an informed career path choice that may link with one of ASA's technical career majors.

### **Audience**

This paper describes the ASA Transfer and New Students Info website that responds to the need for high school and community college students, guidance counselors and parents to explore and plan a program of study that provides the opportunity to enter the workforce while including options to pursue studies for associate and baccalaureate degrees. The Student Support Services program at ASA developed the self-directed website to provide Illinois students with the ability to track their technical high school program of study to an Illinois community college and/or directly to SIUC. The site can help students clarify career options and educational training program options that lead to the career paths they have identified through career self-exploration and assessment activities.

Middle school students should begin developing a broad-based career interest inventory to help them plan to enroll in appropriate high school courses to match their long-term career needs and interests (Dahir, 2001). They will want to take the "eagle's eye" view of careers in that they are mainly looking at an overview of all possible career areas. General skills required, job titles in each career path, associated rewards and responsibilities, and geographic considerations are some of the puzzle pieces that students at this level will explore. They may find that their idea of a perfect career will change several times during this initial career exploration phase. It is very likely though that they will have begun to understand their individual level of interest in a general career area by the time they are ready to enter high school if they have taken the time to investigate characteristics of that career.

High school students begin narrowing their career choices to fit their personal career needs. Ideally, they have begun to plan for a career centered on their natural abilities and interests (Masikiewicz, 2000). With a variety of information at their fingertips, it is anticipated that they will explore career areas more than casually before arriving at a final selection of two or three career and degree possibilities. Finding a good personal fit will increase the likelihood that they will complete their educational activities in a straightforward and logical path and then move into a satisfying career.

A high school student, while exploring several career possibilities, would certainly be initially interested in knowing the skills, level of education, salary, job demand, and working conditions for each career. When one career track has been selected, he or she should be very concerned that the courses taken in high school are appropriate preparation for the next level of education and training. Finally, he or she should be able to map a strategy to prepare for that career in an efficient and effective manner.

Many high school students start career paths seeking immediate entry into the workforce. Most find rewarding careers, however many others realize that further education

is necessary to achieve their career goal. Unfortunately, when they subsequently choose to continue their education we often find that they have not taken high school courses that lead to an efficient and smooth transfer to a baccalaureate degree. The website allows them to quickly determine what options they have for enrolling at SIUC.

Students frequently enroll in community college programs to minimize educational expenses with the intention of transferring to a university after receiving an associate degree. If they have carefully planned their transition, this strategy works quite well. However, all too often students find that they may have spent precious time and money on courses that will not transfer to the program of choice at the university level. This website helps them find programs at their Illinois community college that also fit well with programs at ASA. Some community colleges have articulated program-to-program agreements with ASA to allow their graduates to enroll in the related program at ASA at a junior level with full credit for their Associate Degree coursework.

Community college students who may have originally planned only to complete an associate degree may very well have a completely different set of concerns. That student may be employed and subsequently realize that further education was necessary to allow him or her to advance beyond the level of employment afforded through the associate degree. He or she will want to find a baccalaureate program that allows for a seamless transition into the next phase of career training. Even though the career path has already been established, the student will want to know what program at the university level allows for that transition.

Guidance counselors need access to information to counsel high schools students on associate and baccalaureate degree transfer opportunities. In addition to presenting students with clear information about the degree options available to them through ASA, they can use the website's links to assist students in exploring options for any career that appeals to them. We expect that many of the schools will provide links for their students to explore this option independently. Students who prepare for meetings with their guidance counselors through individual research can help streamline the process and improve their career awareness.

Parents frequently request information about career paths that lead to jobs and options for associate and baccalaureate degree transfer (Lozada, 1999). The website can help reinforce parents' career-related discussions with their children and it can help them understand their child's options through our college.

### **The ASA Transfer and New Students Info Website**

The ASA Transfer and New Students Info website was developed to help students identify career paths that will work best with their skills and career interests and also lead to baccalaureate degrees at SIUC. Knowing that our students enter from a variety of backgrounds, the site briefly and succinctly answers questions that are typically asked by prospective students and then provides appropriate links to resources for obtaining more in-depth information. What information do students need to explore career paths and take steps to choose a future that leads to jobs and options for pursuit of higher education? The website addresses several essential topics for today's high school and college transfer student.

The topics presented below are intentionally focused with information that is quick and easy to access.

***Why would I want a bachelor's degree?***

Certainly not all students' career aspirations require a baccalaureate degree. Our intention was to provide them with tools to make sound career decisions regardless of the educational requirements involved in their ideal career selection. Several arguments for a B.S. degree are included in this section of the site. These arguments can be used to support parents' or counselors' contention that a B.S. degree is important to succeed in many careers. Where the motivator for not entering college is fear, we attempt to allay fears by showing students that their success is supported through the many resources provided by the college, the university, and the community and through links to other sites of value to them.

Many of today's students are interested in exploring careers, and salary is certainly an important consideration. This section depicts the earnings differential for high school, associate and baccalaureate degree graduates. It is intended to motivate students to choose rewarding careers that also offer options to continue their education and complete associate and baccalaureate degrees leading to higher earnings potential. Students have the option to continue their education now or re-enter at a later time to complete a baccalaureate degree and they are enabled to make that decision from an informed position.

***What degree transfer options does ASA offer from my community College?***

Every community college in Illinois is listed, which in turn represents every high school district in the state. When students click on their college, every general program area offered through that college is listed with information about its corresponding baccalaureate transfer options at SIUC. Where there is a logical transfer option to a program offered through the College of Applied Sciences and Arts, that program title links to the corresponding program at ASA. If there is no obvious transfer option to ASA, the link takes you to a course-by-course articulation agreement between SIUC and that college. The student may then explore options in other colleges at SIUC, or they may decide that they still want to transfer to ASA and work out their own transfer agreement with the appropriate Academic Advisor at ASA. It is noted that not all programs that are linked from a college have direct articulation agreements with an ASA program. For an articulated program, the student would enter the program as a junior with the opportunity to complete the baccalaureate degree in two additional years.

***What jobs are right for me?***

This question is the source of great concern for many prospective students at ASA and often people who have already entered the workforce ask themselves that same question. The ideal career is one that makes you feel alive, productive and engaged. Few people find that ideal career because they do not spend enough time exploring their strengths, their capabilities, or their passions as they relate to career selection. We provide several options for students at all stages of career exploration to examine their possibilities. If, for example, a student has no idea what type of career they might like they can click on the list of general careers and then click on an interesting choice. That choice may take the student to a major



in ASA, or it may take them to a list of all majors at SIUC to expand the search.

Another option would be to click on the list of typical careers for ASA students. That list may spark an interest in a student who would then click on the interesting topic to go to information about the program that prepares them for that career. When they have selected a career that sounds interesting to them, students could learn about typical salaries, working conditions, skills required, and geographic considerations for that career by clicking on the "Career Exploration" button. Many students consider careers based on title, salary or perhaps perceived image or status without learning about some of the day-to-day issues. In this section, general job expectations and working conditions are presented to help students decide if a career path fits their personality and interests. Expectations include, detail, dexterity, writing, team work, individual assignments, problem solving, supervision, outdoor work, hands-on with patients, customer complaints, etc.

***What can I do to prepare for entrance into SIUC from my high school?***

Many high school and community college students choose courses that fulfill their institution's graduation requirements, but do not transfer to Illinois universities. This important section lists SIUC's entry requirements for high school graduates. Transfer students can identify those courses that will fulfill university requirements should they chose to transfer immediately or at a later date.

Students wishing to enroll in SIUC directly after completing high school can plan to enroll in high school courses that are required for admission into the university. Again, students are directed to career planning sites to help them solidify their career goals early enough to properly prepare for the next step in their education. They are encouraged to explore all programs offered through ASA to find areas of interest to them while also exploring career paths that take them from high school to community college to ASA. In addition, students may take courses that offer dual credit at their local community college that also will transfer to SIUC.

**Anticipated Outcomes**

Use of this website will help students both prepare for immediate entry into the workforce while also providing for the immediate and/or subsequent seamless transfer to SIUC baccalaureate degree programs. We anticipate that students who utilize the site will have a fairly clear understanding of the program they eventually select and of the career they prepare to enter.

Postsecondary institutions are encouraged to partner with community colleges to develop easily accessible information sources to inform high school and community college transfer students of direct and seamless career paths leading to associate and baccalaureate degree programs. The website described herein can be replicated by universities and community colleges to inform students of entry or transfer options, requirements and procedures.

## Summary

We have created a website that follows through on the career development model by allowing students to examine career preparation activities specific to their needs. The intention of the site is to help prospective students, or those involved in career decision-making, choreograph a well-developed plan for seamless transition from secondary education to community college to university, or directly from secondary education to university, and then into a career that is meaningful and fulfilling to them. The site provides details about types of careers ASA students traditionally enter, characteristics of those careers, and suggestions for preparing to enroll efficiently into ASA programs. It includes links to quality career exploration and informational sites developed by well-known organizations such as America's Career InfoNet, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Further, the site includes links to various types of support available to enable students to successfully enroll and complete career development programs at SIUC.

Conclusion

Students, parents, and guidance counselors need career information provided in a variety of formats. Students need easy access to reliable information to help them make an informed career decision. They should have information available to help them develop realistic career expectations, and they need to be aware of resources available to assist them in successfully preparing for their chosen career. We invite our readers to link to our website, encourage students and others to use it to enhance career exploration activities, and possibly replicate and/or modify portions to fit their needs.

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# **The Application of Holland's Career Theory in Modern Day Career Services: Integrating the Self-Directed Search and the Career Thoughts Inventory**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the utility of the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Jr., Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996a) in concert with a widely used interest inventory associated with Holland's theory of vocational behavior. The chapter begins with an analysis of the gap in career interest assessment, followed by a brief review of the CTI and its uses in practice. A case study demonstrating the integration of the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1994) and the CTI is described, and the chapter ends with final conclusions based on the integration of the CTI and the SDS.

Though some may question the relevance of Holland's (1997) career theory in modern day career development interventions, practitioners at the Florida State University Career Center are using numerous applications of this theory in practice each day. One way in which Holland's theory and associated resources are used in practice at the FSU Career Center is in concert with the CTI. The CTI serves as a useful screening tool for practitioners assisting clients with a range of career concerns, perhaps most common of which is interest assessment. There are several implications of the application of this theory for both practitioners and clients.

## **The Gap in Career Interest Assessment**

Interest inventories such as Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1994) have the potential to provide clients with direction and clarity in the career decision-making process. However, it is not uncommon for individuals to face difficulties in processing the information they obtain from interest inventories. In such cases, a screening instrument such as the CTI (Sampson Jr. et al., 1996a) may be used to evaluate the degree to which the client is likely to benefit from use of the interest inventory. As a screening tool, the CTI identifies clients whose negative thinking may impede their effective use of the results of the SDS. As a needs assessment instrument, the CTI further identifies the specific aspects of the career decision-making process that are likely to provide challenges to the individual. As Reardon and Lenz (1998, p. 155) suggested, "practitioners can use both the CTI and SDS results to help clients see where they may be stuck and what activities may be needed to get them unstuck..."

The CTI shares many similarities with the identity scale of My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980). Both instruments are useful in identifying

individuals for whom the Holland typology may not “work,” due to a lack of vocational identity or low career decision-making readiness. Reardon and Lenz (1999) indicated that individuals with low scores on the MVS are likely to need greater individualized assistance in using their SDS scores effectively in the career decision-making process. They further noted that low vocational identity might be an indication that interest patterns identified by the SDS may not be stable, and may change as vocational identity increases. The same holds true when the CTI is used in screening for career decision-making readiness. We use the CTI as the primary screening and needs assessment tool at the FSU Career Center as a result of its foundation in theory, solid psychometric properties, and the auxiliary learning resource that accompanies the instrument, the CTI Workbook (Sampson Jr., Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996b).

### ***The Career Thoughts Inventory***

The Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a) was developed in order to assist high school students, college students, and adults in making career decisions, and to augment the quality of the services they receive in solving career problems and making career decisions. According to the authors, “the CTI is a self-administered, objectively scored measure of dysfunctional thinking in career problem solving and decision making” (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a, p.1). Along with the CTI Workbook (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996b), this instrument may be used as an assessment instrument and an intervention in the career decision-making process.

There are three main uses of the CTI in practice: screening, needs assessment, and as a learning resource (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a). In screening, the CTI may be used to identify individuals who are characterized by high levels of dysfunctional career thinking, who may be in need of greater assistance in the career decision-making process. In terms of needs assessment, the CTI can be used to gain a more specific understanding of the nature of the client’s career problem, specifically by analyzing the individual’s scores on the three scales of the instrument. This needs assessment enables the practitioner to target the needs of the individual and select appropriate interventions to assist them in the career decision-making process. Finally, the CTI and the accompanying CTI Workbook (Sampson Jr., et al., 1996b) may be used as a learning resource in counseling, providing concrete activities to assist the individual in identifying, altering, challenging, and acting upon dysfunctional career thoughts (Sampson, Jr., et al., 1996a).

The idea that dysfunctional thinking may negatively impact an individual’s efforts to make a career decision is the foundation of this instrument. This instrument is undergirded by the assumption that negative or dysfunctional thinking patterns impact the individuals’ emotions and behavior. Thus, the goal is to reframe or restructure these dysfunctional thoughts so that they will not act as barriers in the decision-making process (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a). The CTI assesses the underlying construct of dysfunctional career thinking through an assessment of the nature of the statements endorsed by the individual relative to the career decision-making process. Sampson, Jr. et al. (1996a, p.2) define career thoughts as “outcomes of one’s thinking about assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, plans, and/or strategies related to career problem solving and decision making.”

Statements endorsed on the CTI yield a total score, as well as three sub-scale scores.

The total score is reflective of global dysfunctional thinking. The Decision-Making Confusion (DMC) sub-scale measures the degree of difficulty an individual has in commencing or continuing in the career decision-making process. High scores on the DMC scale typically reflect an individual's lack of knowledge regarding how to make decisions or emotions that are stopping the individual from moving forward with a decision. The Commitment Anxiety (CA) sub-scale assesses the level of difficulty an individual has in committing to a choice, which is typically associated with anxiety. Finally, the External Conflict (EC) sub-scale measures an individual's level of difficulty distinguishing between his or her own priorities in the decision-making process and the opinions of significant others (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a).

Initial research demonstrated that the CTI is a reliable and valid measure for all three of the populations upon which the instrument was normed: high school students, college students, and adults (Sampson Jr. et al., 1996a). A number of additional studies have analyzed the relationship between dysfunctional career thoughts and various constructs related to vocational behavior and overall life adjustment. These studies have increased what is known about the construct of dysfunctional career thoughts, and have supported the convergent validity of the instrument (Vernick, 1999).

### **Integrating the Self-Directed Search and the Career Thoughts Inventory: The Case of Sue**

Sue's presenting problem was that she was unsure of the direction in which to steer her career. She presented for career counseling after quitting a job with which she was extremely unhappy, and saw this time as her opportunity to take a step back and decide what she would like to do with the rest of her life. When she initiated career counseling, Sue had a bachelor's degree in psychology and work experience as a receptionist. She expressed the sentiment that the areas in which she had focused her career in the past were not career fields she would like to pursue in the future.

On her client intake form, Sue listed nurse midwife, nurse practitioner, health educator, and librarian as some of the occupations she was considering. The Holland codes for these occupations are SIR, ISA, SEA, and SAI, respectively. She seemed to be conflicted between choosing a career in healthcare or a career as a librarian. She expressed a great deal of interest in the field of healthcare, yet said that her husband had been trying to convince her to become a librarian in light of the more stable work conditions and hours typical of individuals in this field. She was unsure of which option would make her the most happy, and expressed that her husband had exerted a large influence on her career decision making thus far.

#### ***Assessments***

Sue utilized a number of assessment instruments in her career decision-making process. Among the assessments used were the Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1994) and the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson Jr. et al., 1996a). Her assessment results were as follows:

## SDS

### *Occupational Daydreams*

Certified Nurse Midwife	SIR
ESOL Teacher	SAE
Librarian	SAI
Writer	AIE
Therapist	SIA
Public Health Educator	SEA

*Holland Code:* SAC

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>
Realistic (R)	17
Investigative (I)	23
Artistic (A)	33
Social (S)	45
Enterprising (E)	20
Conventional (C)	32

## CTI

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>T-Score</i>	<i>Percentile</i>
CTI Total	59	60	84
Decision-Making Confusion (DMC)	13	57	76
Commitment Anxiety (CA)	18	66	95
External Conflict (EC)	7	69	97

\*Scale elevations in bold

### ***Career Diagnosis***

Sue presented for individual counseling as an undecided individual. Her scores on the CTI indicated that External Conflict and Commitment Anxiety posed problems for her in her career decision making. Sue seemed to have a considerable amount of self-knowledge, and was able to identify her interests, skills, and values with relative ease. However, her executive processing was largely limited by her negative career thinking, and the degree to which she was able to effectively apply her self-knowledge was somewhat questionable. Sue's metacognitions suggested the need for reframing, but her overall upbeat attitude indicated that work in this area would likely lead to positive results in a relatively short time.

### ***Career Counseling Outcomes***

Sue engaged the career decision-making process with a great deal of motivation and interest. Beginning with the first session, she put forth a considerable amount of effort in working towards the achievement of her career goals and the closure of her identified gap. Each week Sue presented as dedicated to her career decision making and was enthusiastic about learning.

Though she scored slightly above average on this sub-scale of the CTI, Decision-Making Confusion was not an overwhelming barrier for Sue. She seemed to have a considerable amount of self-knowledge, and was willing to work with her career counselor to move through the steps of the career decision-making process. Her efforts, however, seemed to be hampered by her negative career thoughts in the areas of Commitment Anxiety and External Conflict.

Sue's scores on the Commitment Anxiety sub-scale of the CTI reflected a barrier in her career decision making. Early in the career counseling relationship, Sue stated that she was afraid of actually jumping into a chosen career until she was relatively sure it was the "right one" for her. Work in career counseling targeted the appropriateness and functionality of this career thought. After identifying thoughts of this nature as negative, Sue worked on altering, challenging, and acting upon new career thoughts. Her effectiveness in engaging the process of reframing negative thoughts in this area helped her to take positive action towards making a career decision.

At the start of counseling, Sue was very concerned with obtaining her husband's support for her career choice. A few sessions into the counseling relationship, she stated that she would not be able to move forward without the support of her husband. She appeared to be extremely reliant on external sources of evaluation and seemed to be characterized by an external locus of control. After she had learned to identify, challenge, and alter her negative career thoughts, Sue came to the conclusion that her over-reliance upon her husband's views of her career was hindering her individual career development. After reframing her negative career thoughts associated with External Conflict, she stated that she would really like it if her husband supported her decision, but if this were not the case initially, she would hope that he would come around some day. Once Sue decided that she was going to put all of her effort into what would make her happy, she stopped fighting against her husband and went about the task of working towards a satisfying career decision. At this time, her husband began to ease up as well and their relationship improved a great deal.

After Sue had effectively worked through the process of reframing her negative career thoughts, she was ready to use the information she obtained from the Self-Directed Search more effectively. It was as if her negative career thinking, largely centered on Commitment Anxiety and External Conflict, impacted the lens through which she viewed her career options. After effectively working through these negative career thoughts, she was able to recognize the range of opportunities open to her, and work towards making a satisfying career decision.

In light of her high interest and skills in the Social area, occupations in the helping professions seemed to be a good fit for Sue. As a result of the lack of differentiation between her scores in the other five areas of the Holland typology, Sue recognized that there were

likely to be a broad array of options in the Social area that would be desirable to her. She researched a range of options with an open mind, and finally settled on nursing as her first choice.

### Summary and Conclusions

At the conclusion of individual counseling, Sue had accomplished a great deal in working towards the achievement of her goals. The goals outlined on her Individual Action Plan (IAP; Sampson Jr. et al., 1996b) were achieved for the most part, and she was successful in accomplishing the various tasks that were continually added to her IAP. Sue did a great deal of research and decided that she would like to pursue a career in nursing. She did a number of informational interviews, followed by a few site visits and shadowing experiences. She found a way to get her hands on any and every piece of information she could find related to the field of nursing, and remained excited about pursuing a career in this area.

Through her work in career counseling, Sue reached the final stage of the career decision-making process, and was planning the education necessary to lead her to her ultimate goal. She terminated counseling satisfied with the progress she had made, having learned quite a bit about the career decision-making process, and having gained a considerable amount of knowledge about herself along the way. However, it is unlikely that all of this would have been possible had the CTI (Sampson, Jr. et al., 1996a) not been integrated with the SDS (Holland, 1994) in the career counseling process.

After effectively working through the problematic negative career thoughts identified by the CTI, Sue was able to successfully use the information obtained from the SDS. After recognizing her difficulty with Commitment Anxiety and External Conflict, she worked towards reframing specific career thoughts in these areas, and altered her metacognitions related to the career decision-making process. This, in turn, enabled her to view her results on the SDS objectively, and identify occupational options that complemented her interests and skills. No longer was she afraid to commit to a career decision, nor was she overly reliant on the views of significant others. As career counselors, there is little more that can we expect or desire from our clients.

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# **Career Development and Adults with Moderate to Severe Mental Retardation**

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## **Introduction**

Lifelong career development activities may assist persons with more severe forms of mental retardation in achieving occupational tenure. Occupational tenure is important if individuals are to move away from a succession of entry-level employment. Adaptive career development strategies and techniques may prevent job dissatisfaction and poor performance. This paper reviews information regarding the importance of lifelong career development activities and strategies to create career growth within existing supported educational and work settings.

## **Career Development and Adults with Moderate to Severe Mental Retardation**

Career development is vital to a quality lifestyle for persons with more severe forms of mental retardation. However, the existing research on the vocational rehabilitation of persons with moderate to severe mental retardation focuses on occupational choice rather than career development (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999). Occupational choice reflects a person's vocational decision at any point in time, whereas career development reflects an ongoing, developmental process that incorporates and integrates personal and environmental information (Szymanski & Hanley-Maxwell, 1996). Career development is a dynamic process requiring individuals to engage in the ongoing assessment, analysis and synthesis of relevant information.

For adults functioning within the moderate or severe range of mental retardation ongoing career counseling is an essential addition to skill development activities to promote career development. However, the focus on job placement and tenure activities often precludes a thoughtful focus on career development. This paper provides the rationale for, and illustrates the importance of, the inclusion of career development counseling in facilitating increased job satisfaction and promoting sustained patterns of employment among persons with moderate to severe mental retardation.

## **The Need for Career Development**

The research on career development suggests that there has been a tremendous shift in traditional work and in supported employment settings for persons with more severe forms of mental retardation over the past several decades (Mank, Cioffi, & Yovanoff, 2000). Successful career paths often reflect a succession of employed positions at different settings

rather than a single, sustained placement. As a result, a successful career trajectory might include a succession of short-term employment situations that positively contributed to an employee's existing job skills and professional portfolio. Career development can be a strategic method to achieve uninterrupted vocational development through successive employment opportunities.

Among adults with mental retardation, employment and job tenure is low (Schafer, Banks & Kregel, 1991). The finding that individuals with disabilities change jobs over time is a natural outcome of employment and is supported by employment statistics (Pumpian, Fisher, Certo, & Smalley, 1997). The cyclical nature of the labor market experience of most persons with more severe forms of mental retardation illustrates the need to maintain and enhance a positive outlook toward employment through long-term career goals that compliment short-term employment activities.

While, intelligence is associated with career maturity and decision-making skills, factors other than skills, abilities, and personality play a major role in career development and satisfaction. Factors such as interests, social opportunities, emotional rewards, as well as economic benefits influence career choices for all individuals. Career development activities may assist in clarifying and documenting factors key to occupational engagement in addition to facilitating sustained vocational growth through varied and sporadic employment.

### **Career Development Models**

Education for persons with disabilities should focus upon the development of a career. Career counseling is an important component of vocational education (Solly, 1987). However, career development activities should not end with the achievement of vocational tenure in young adulthood. (Hagner & Solomone, 1989). Career education should be a dynamic and lifelong process because persons with intellectual disabilities are always changing. Unfortunately, the rehabilitation system has not applied theories and models of typical career development to mature workers with disabilities (Pumpian et. al., 1997).

Vocational development theories often have not been viewed as applicable to persons with developmental disabilities (Hagner & Salomone, 1989). The interaction of the developmental nature of the disability and developmental nature of career development can lead to a variety of impediments in the career development of persons with developmental disabilities. Without the guiding influence of normative maturation process in areas outside of the vocational arena: social, financial, educational, and emotional, it is difficult to propose a model that is inclusive of the tremendous developmental heterogeneity of individuals who are diagnosed with developmental intellectual disabilities.

Szymanski and Hanley-Maxwell (1996) propose an ecological model of career development for persons with developmental disabilities. The ecological model incorporates the factors important in career interventions regardless of intellectual ability: family, education, planning, functional curriculum, and choice. Interventions focus upon individual factors (i.e., aptitudes), contextual factors (i.e., labor market), meaning factors (i.e., values), work environment factors (i.e., adaptations), and output factors (i.e., productivity expectations).

## Career Development Activities

Career development can be conceptualized as a series of decisions over time. Career development is a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and continuing to make choices (Brown et. al., 1996). An assumption of career development is that future job and career choices will be more sophisticated and successful than previous choices (Pumpian et. al., 1997). Consistent with the career development patterns of most adults with moderate to severe forms of mental retardation, regular job movement needs to be considered positively in terms of promotion and career mobility rather than a sign of failure.

A longitudinal approach to occupational development is important. The authors' experience in developing career guidance programs for adults with severe forms of mental retardation suggests that career development activities should include the development of career interests and transferable work behaviors as well as the reframing of existing occupational opportunities to meet individual occupational preferences.

### *Career interests*

Persons with developmental disabilities may lack realistic information on which to base their interests. Job experiences play an important part in developing consistent occupational preference (Hagner & Salomone, 1989). Career interests may be stimulated through short-term job try out experiences that include documentation of preferences and performance. Often, such brief career development opportunities can be incorporated into volunteer, leisure, and activities of daily living.

### *Transferable skills*

Career planning can play a key role in creating a strategy to identify, develop, and maintain vocational skills over a succession of employment opportunities. Individuals with mental retardation often have difficulties generalizing work behavior to new vocational contexts. The development of skills congruent with abilities, aptitudes, and aspirations within multiple vocational contexts can promote employability and career advancement.

### *Reframe existing opportunities*

Career choice presupposes the existence of alternatives from which to choose (Hagner & Salomone, 1989). However, there may be few vocational choices and limited occupational alternatives, especially in rural areas, for persons with more severe forms mental retardation. The courses of occupational change that are common among peers (e.g. relocation) may not be realistic options for persons with developmental disabilities who are more dependent upon family, local case management resources, and often lack the financial means to relocate. Career development activities can identify salient vocational factors critical to consumer satisfaction. Such information can be used to emphasize those features within existing opportunities and create those features when available opportunities have limited opportunity to contribute to the individual's career.

## Conclusion

Career development services are critical elements in alleviating unemployment for adults with severe disabilities (Pumpian et. al., 1997). An expanded view of career interventions includes planned and deliberate programmatic intervention utilizing techniques that are effective with persons with developmental disabilities. "Having a career does not mean being placed in a job but having the opportunity to make choices" (Hagner & Salomone, 1989, p. 154). Like persons without impairments, successful transition to a new occupation is the result of planning, informed choices, and knowledge of risks and rewards.

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# **The Senior Experience: A Transition to the World of Work**

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## **Introduction**

In 1997, John N. Gardner, Gretchen Van der Veer and associates published their landmark book, *The Senior Year Experience: Facilitating Integration, Reflection, Closure, and Transition*. One impact of this book, and the Senior Year Experience program within the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina at Columbia, was to motivate student affairs professionals and this career counselor, specifically, to create a university-wide course for seniors to help prepare them for the major transition of leaving college and successfully entering the world of work. This paper will outline how such a life-skill course was designed and conducted based on four years of experience of teaching the course at a large southeastern research university.

## **The Senior Experience**

Cuseo (1997) listed ten goals for the Senior Year Experience movement of which a Senior Year Experience course would be just one supporting element:

1. Promoting the coherence and relevance of general education.
2. Promoting integration and connection between general education AND the academic major.
3. Fostering integration and synthesis within the academic major.
4. Promoting meaningful connections between the academic major and work (career) experiences.
5. Explicitly and intentionally developing important student skills, competencies, and perspectives, which are tacitly or incidentally developed in the college curriculum (for example, leadership skills, character and values development).
6. Enhancing awareness of, and support for the key personal adjustments encountered by seniors during their transition from college to post college life.
7. Improving senior career preparation and pre-professional development, that is to say, facilitating their transition from the academic to the professional world.
8. Enhancing seniors' preparation and prospects for post-graduate education.
9. Promoting effective life-planning and decision-making with respect to

practical issues likely to be encountered in adult life after college (for example, financial planning, marriage and family planning).

10. Encouraging a sense of unity and community among the senior class, which can serve as a foundation for later alumni networking and future alumni support of the college.

Many of these goals support the notion of offering a special course for seniors. Student affairs and career development specialists have a body of knowledge and expertise for which they are perfectly prepared to teach that which support Cuseo's (1997) goals six, seven, eight and nine. This also provides an appropriate opportunity for career counselors to build bridges with students and the general faculty by teaching such a course. However, perhaps the most important reasons for offering a course like The Senior Year Experience are the tremendous demand by students for developing career skills, and the effectiveness and efficiency of providing a course to teach such skills.

This paper will discuss the strategy for the course, its syllabus, and the methods used to teach and facilitate the course. It is hoped that this paper will encourage and support student affairs professionals, especially career development specialists and counselors to develop and offer similar psycho-educational courses at their colleges and universities.

The central focus of the Senior Year Experience course is on the practical, developmental, and psychological elements experienced during a successful transition from life as an undergraduate student to the life of a citizen/worker. Emphasis is placed upon integrating academic experiences into post-graduate plans of employment and life beyond college. An intensive career planning process is used to expand self-awareness, and develop self-marketing techniques into plans for successful employment and career goals after college. The course uses a holistic dimension of practical issues that deal with the process of leaving college that include personal, social, vocational, political, civic, financial, and psychological elements.

The goals of the course are to enable the student to:

1. Prepare for the process of transition during and after their senior year, including examination of individual developmental issues such as personal, social, vocational, financial, political, civic, spiritual, physical, and psychological.
2. Understand and implement the components of a structured career development and planning process.
3. Demonstrate improved writing and speaking skills in assignments of both an academic and professional nature.
4. Work as an effective member of a team to analyze, evaluate and decide the best courses of action, when confronted with difficult problems.
5. Organize, monitor team progress, and present their work to their peers for critical review and discussion.
6. Evaluate the practical issues facing graduating seniors through a series of seminars conducted by practicing professionals in areas such as deciding where to live, and work; buy or rent a home, automobile and insurance; alumni involvement and responsibilities; adapting to the first year on the job; traveling for business and pleasure; managing wellness; and how best to adapt to new relationships and lifestyles, and

7. Prepare a professional portfolio, resume and cover letter and successfully interview for their career position of choice.

The major course requirements are:

1. Each student is expected to read all assigned readings prior to class, and to be prepared to participate in discussions, and in the question, answer, and evaluation portions of presentations by fellow students, as well as with guest speakers.

- a. Each student presents a five-minute summary of an article to the class on a topic related to transitions or career development after college. An additional 5 minutes are used to discuss the implications of the article and to answer questions. Two class days are used near the end of the course for these presentations, and these classes have become one of the highlights of the course as students expound on the major points emphasized in the course. This has become a wonderful way to bring closure to the course, and to summarize all that has been learned during the semester.

- b. Due to the fact that this course is highly interactive and a variety of topics are covered, participation and class attendance are mandatory, and assessed daily. In addition, when guest speakers are invited, these professionals are giving of their time and expertise to visit with the class. For this reason, students are expected to participate by being prepared to ask relevant questions of the guests. Each unexcused absence reduces the participation score by ten points. Arriving late to class twice counts as an unexcused absence, unless a late arrival was beyond the student's control. Two unexcused absences reduces the earned final grade one full letter grade. A third unexcused absence reduces the earned final grade two full letter grades, and if a student has four unexcused absences, they fail the course. This rather strict attendance policy is used to reinforce the idea that attendance at work is mandatory, not optional like many of the classes the students have taken during their college career.

2. In order for the students to master the skills necessary for career development and enhancement, a hands-on structured career planning process is used to develop and implement the processes of self-assessment, career confirmation, decision-making, and self-marketing, which are all necessary for successful transitions from college to the world of work and for future career changes. This process requires each student to complete all of the following activities:

- a. Completion of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Strong Interest Inventory, including participating in a class interpretation and analysis session.

- b. A career analysis project that requires each student to:

- (1) Write an analysis on their primary occupation of interest by researching the occupation using resources in the university library, Career Development Services office, the Internet, and direct contact with organization representatives to investigate the specifics of their field of interest; the main responsibilities; needed training; specifics of the working environment; the job outlook; additional sources of information and



job leads for the occupation; potential earnings and intangible, personal and professional characteristics of the position. This report is 2-4 double-spaced pages in length.

(2) Conduct an informational interview with a professional (either in person or by phone) working directly or indirectly in their field of interest using the procedures and questions discussed in class and on a handout given to them in class. The students ask questions like, "What progress have you made?" "What have you learned?" "What mistakes have you made?" "What do you like best about your job?" and "What do you like least about your job?" After the interview, the students write a report that is 1-2 double-spaced pages in length.

(3) Submit a cover letter, a resume, and a 1-2 page double-spaced personal strategic marketing plan that maps out their job search strategy to include resources that will aid them in finding their first professional job.

(4) And, create a portfolio table of contents and plan of action incorporating items (1, 2, & 3) above in an effort to integrate the results of their overall development and activity/work efforts during their college career. Developing a portfolio table of contents involves listing tangible "products" such as papers, awards, students organizations, projects, and committees that they have produced or been a member of during their college career that illustrates accomplishments and skills related to their marketing plan to employers. The plan of action describes how to use the portfolio to illustrate their experience, strengths, and talents that make them an ideal candidate for the job they are seeking. In the plan of action, the students attempt to answer questions like, "What progress have you made?" "What have you learned?" "What mistakes have you made?" and "What do you need to add to your skill sets?" The students direct their answers toward the elements of their marketing plan for their number one job target. Portfolios can be organized in chronological or functional formats. Each student presents their portfolio outline and plan of action to the class.

3. The class is divided into teams of 3-4 members whose assignment is to analyze a city of their choice as a potential site for college graduates to live and work. The project structure is organized around three themes: strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness. Information presented includes an analysis of economic, financial, social, climate, and cultural elements, as well as an overview of major employers in the area. Grades are based on organization, presentation, and depth of information developed. Each member of the group participates in the presentation, and professional dress, handouts, and visual aids are expected.

4. There are two in-class tests given based on assigned readings, class presentations and discussions, handouts, article presentations, and seminar discussions. Each exam is open book, and the use of notes and handouts are also encouraged.

Beyond this structured process that requires the students to produce tangible products that they will use later in their job search, several classes deal with practical situations that all students face during the process of winning their first great job. There are two classes dedicated to interviewing skills. Each student is also required to do a "mock interview" at the university career center to practice the techniques discussed. Students quickly learn that practice can really improve their ability to promote their skills and potential to an employer

during the interview process.

Another class deals with how and when to negotiate the job offer. Concepts such as “total compensation” as opposed to salary are discussed in detail. Methods to compare offers on location and benefits are analyzed. This class deals with the specifics of 401k plans, company stock options, pension plans, health plans, dental plans and many more benefits. Students are usually surprised that the benefits package can sometimes amount to nearly one-third of one’s salary. Further, cost of living differences among locations can easily account for a five to ten percent difference in real dollars. Once students understand that negotiating is not only possible, but also expected by many companies, their interest in job offer negotiation perks up.

A class on personal financial planning naturally follows the class on job offer negotiations. Students are usually interested and excited about the idea of what to do with their salary and how to manage their benefits. The financial planning class is entitled, “So You Want to be a Millionaire!” This class deals with financial budgeting, planning and investing for their future. The concepts of “doubling” and “the time value of money” as they relate to regular investing are discussed in detail, and with great interest by most students.

The last set of classes are not directly associated with the career analysis project but deal with relationships with others. First, there is a class dealing with how their relationships with their classmates and significant others may change as a result of graduation and acceptance of a job that may well be very far from most of their friends. From the discussion of how their college relationships may change, a second class goes into the relationships that will develop in their new organization. The importance of understanding the organization, identifying mentors, and relating with a more diverse, at least based on age, group of people are discussed. A special seminar is held on the challenges and common frustrations that new college graduates face in organizations, whether small or large, and how organizational size alone brings different opportunities and challenges.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In summary, a course for seniors to help them refine the skills so necessary to compete for their first job, and how to succeed in the world of work is a very effective and active way to reach students. The course is organized around the career planning process that adds structure and produces products that the student will be using in their job search. This adds realism and interest to the course. Beyond developing a cover letter, resume, self-marketing plan, portfolio and plan of action, the students also work on their skills of interviewing and negotiating job offers. Practical matters such as personal financial planning, and how to deal effectively in establishing and maintaining good relationships during their transition from college to work and beyond are discussed and debated.

Student opinions about the value of the course are best captured by the often-expressed sentiments, “Everybody should be required to take this course!” and “I’ve learned so much in this course that is going to help me now!” After teaching the Senior Year Experience course for over four years to over 120 students, I have found that through the process of teaching a course about transitioning from college to the world of work, I have become a much better career counselor who remains more in tune with what skills graduating seniors

need to improve to be competitive in today's job market. This alone is a very good reason for career counselors to develop and teach such a course. I have also found that by teaching this course, I relate better with and work more collegially with the faculty. Teaching the Senior Year Experience requires time and work, but seeing the appreciation and joy of landing a truly great job before graduation is payback enough.

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